

Poor safety blamed for Cairo deaths

CAIRO (R) — An Egyptian government report has blamed inadequate safety precautions for the high death toll in a fire that destroyed a luxury Cairo hotel on Thursday. But the preliminary Interior Ministry report, widely reported in the local media Saturday, brought a swift rebuttal from the hotel's operators, who said it was fully equipped with safety devices according to local regulations. At least 17 people died when the five-star Helopolis Sheraton caught fire in the early hours of Thursday morning. Police sources said Saturday that 18 of the gutted hotel's 690 rooms were still blocked by rubble and hot metal and it was possible that more bodies would be found inside. A number of foreign tourists are not yet accounted for. Sami Zoghbi, head of the Middle East division of ITC Corp's Sheraton Collection, which managed the Helopolis under contract for its Egyptian and Kuwaiti owners, said: "The hotel was built according to local fire regulations. You can't build a hotel without getting a licence... the hotel was fitted with all equipment required according to local fire regulations."

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Subsidies raised for civil, military societies

AMMAN (Petra) — The Cabinet Saturday decided to raise subsidies for civil servants and military personnel by JD 4.5 million for fiscal year 1990. According to the Cabinet decision, custom and tax exemptions for the Military Consumer Society was raised from JD 4.5 million to JD 7 million, while exemptions for the Civil Consumer Society was raised from JD 4.5 to JD 6.5 million.

Rains replenish water reservoirs

AMMAN (J.T.) — The recent rains that fell in Jordan have replenished dams' reservoirs in the Kingdom and provided water to farmlands in the Jordan Valley without having to draw from the reservoirs, according to Mohammad Bani Hani, secretary general of the Jordan Valley Authority (JVA). Bani Hani expressed hope that more rain would fall during March to raise the level of water in the reservoirs used to irrigate farmlands in the dry season. Bani Hani said that water at the King Talal Dam was now estimated at 37.5 million cubic metres, out of a total capacity of 82 million. 13.2 million at the Wadi Al Arab dam, which has a total capacity of 20 million. 2.6 million at the Shahrabil Dam, which has a capacity of 4.5 million cubic metres. Wadi Shu'eib, 2.5 million and 4.8 million cubic metres at Kafra Dam.

Woerner backs special NATO talks

BRUSSELS (AP) — North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) Secretary-General Manfred Woerner said Saturday he favoured calling a special meeting of foreign ministers of the alliance to discuss German unification and arms control issues. Some smaller NATO countries have complained about being left out of discussions on the future of the two German states and suggested an emergency conference. "I personally favour the idea," Woerner told reporters at NATO headquarters after meeting with Czechoslovak Foreign Minister Jiri Dienstbier.

Soviets ready to join Interpol

MOSCOW (AP) — The Soviet Union is ready to join Interpol at its next congress in late 1990, Interior Minister Vadim Bakatin has said. Interpol is the international criminal police organisation, a worldwide clearinghouse for law enforcement officials to trade information on international criminals. It particularly focuses narcotics, smuggling, counterfeiting and forgery.

Body of British woman found in Cyprus

NICOSIA (AP) — A police spokesman said the body of a missing British school teacher was found Saturday near the western port of Pafos, according to the Cyprus News Agency. Celia Toy, 46, lived with her husband, British pensioner Raymond George Fredrik Toy, 62, in the village of Marathumta in the Paphos district since 1983. Toy was detained Friday as part of the police's investigation into the disappearance of Mrs. Toy. She was last seen Monday at the Anglo-American International School where she was headmistress of the elementary section. The police detained Toy after finding traces of blood on the couple's automobile.

1 shot dead in Srinagar

SRINAGAR (AP) — Paramilitary troops shot and killed one man Saturday as small groups of protesters defied curfew orders confining them to their homes for the second straight day after the Kashmir Valley's largest demonstration against Indian rule, witnesses said. Hundreds of paramilitary police and border guards were rushed back to Kashmir after at least 49 people were shot to death Thursday by army and paramilitary troops, police and airport sources said.

King visits Iraq for talks on Arab developments

AMMAN (J.T.) — His Majesty King Hussein Saturday paid a brief working visit to Baghdad for talks with Iraqi President Saddam Hussein on bilateral relations, the outcome of last week's Arab Cooperation Council summit, and the latest developments in the Arab and international arenas.

According to Jordan Television, the meeting was attended on the Iraqi side by First Deputy Prime Minister Taha Yassin Ramadan, Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Tariq Aziz, Deputy Prime Minister Sa'doun Hammadi, Minister of Culture and Information Latif Nusayyif Jasem, and the Iraqi ambassador to Jordan.

The Jordanian side to the talks included Royal Court Chief Sharif Zeid Ben Shaker, and the Jordanian ambassador to Iraq, King Hussein and President Hussein met in Amman last week at the ACC summit. The regional alliance grouping Egypt, Iraq, Jordan and North Yemen.

Officials quoted by Reuters said the King would fly to Paris on Monday for talks on Middle East peace efforts and Soviet Jewish emigration to Israel, which has alarmed Jordan and the Arab World.

They said he would travel on to London for similar discussions with Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher.

Up to 100,000 Soviet Jews are expected in Israel this year. Several hundred have settled in the Israeli-occupied West Bank. Following the ACC summit,



His Majesty King Hussein with Iraqi President Saddam Hussein in Baghdad Saturday (Petra wirephoto). last week, King Hussein toured Kuwait, Bahrain, Qatar and the United Arab Emirates to brief their leaders on the summit and on the dangers inherent in Soviet Jewish influx to Palestine.

IMF to review progress of Jordan's adjustments

By Ghadeer Taher
Jordan Times Staff Writer

AMMAN — An International Monetary Fund (IMF) delegation arrived here Saturday for follow-up talks on the progress of Jordan's economic structural adjustment programme agreed with the fund in April last year and the release of the remaining part of a standby IMF credit approved in July as part of the agreement.

Abdul Shakour Shaalan, head of the IMF's Middle East Department, is scheduled to have three days of talks with Jordanian officials to conduct the review, which was delayed partly due to the November general elections and the parliamentary debate on the 1990 draft budget in January, according to Minister of Finance Basel Jaradneh.

Jardaneh told the Jordan Times Saturday that he did not expect any problems to surface during the talks, which, he said, will pave the way for the release of the remaining \$44 million in standby credit approved last July.

The central focus of talks between Jordanian officials and Shaalan, who arrived from Paris, is expected to be the 1990 national budget, which incorporates measures designed to meet the IMF's requirements of gradual reduction of the deficits in the budget as well as balance of payments.

Although Jardaneh did not expect problems to arise during this week's talks, banking sources said the IMF might seek some cuts in subsidies and military spending and a detailed explanation of projected revenues in the budget, which was approved by the Lower House of Parliament in January.

One diplomat quoted by Reuters said: "I don't think the IMF will be ecstatic about the budget. There are cuts but it is not the bare-bones budget the IMF had in mind. It is too early for the IMF to be too difficult, but they will hit subsidies and military spending."

Economists noted that Jordan had brought down the budget deficit to 16 per cent of the gross domestic product from about 24 per cent in 1988 and 20 per cent in 1989 in line with an IMF stipulation.

Jordan, which has already reached agreements to reschedule its 1989 and 1990 repayments of its total foreign debts of \$8.3 billion to the Paris Club of creditor governments and the London Club of commercial institutions, has already covered \$150 million in arrears due in 1989.

Central Bank of Jordan (CBJ) Governor Mohammad Saeed Nabulsi said recently that Jordan paid \$150 million in arrears in the first two months of 1990 and that he expected the Kingdom to pay \$700 million in debt servicing this year.

Nabulsi said an expected increase to \$850 million from \$600 million in 1989 in expatriate remittances and a 12 per cent increase in exports in addition to financial aid from Arab states were enough to cover the Kingdom's external financial commitments for 1990.

The budget, which projects a deficit of JD 199.1 million before financing, includes JD 87.46 million in principal and interest payments in 1990.

Jordan has to sign bilateral agreements with four Paris Club members in line with the broader agreement reached with the group. It was also reported that the Kingdom was having some differences over interest rates with Britain, a major creditor.

Shamir said to accept U.S. plan

TEL AVIV (Agencies) — Israel Television said Saturday that Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir would accept a U.S. formula for convening the first-ever Israeli-Palestinian peace talks.

Shamir met with cabinet ministers of his right-wing Likud bloc at his home Saturday to win backing for the plan proposed by U.S. Secretary of State James Baker, the report said.

The television report was broadcast during the meeting.

It said the formula to be voted on by the policy-making inner cabinet next week would only require Israel to state its willingness to hold talks with Palestinians registered as residents of the Israeli-occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip.

The formula clears the way for Israel to accept talks in Cairo without having to confront the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) demand that Palestinians who live in Arab Jerusalem be included in the talks.

After the receiving Israel's positive response, Baker will summon his Israeli and Egyptian counterparts to discuss which Palestinians will take part, Israel Television said.

It added that Shamir demanded in return for his acceptance of peace talks with Labour Vice-Premier Shimon Peres stop trying to form a coalition government without Likud.

Shamir, Peres, Likud Foreign Minister Moshe Arens and

Labour Defence Minister Yitzhak Rabin were due to meet Sunday.

Arab Jerusalem has been one key issue delaying talks on Shamir's proposal for Arab elections in occupied territories.

The television said Shamir and his top three ministers, including Labour leaders, would assure the United States privately that Palestinians expelled from the occupied territories and those who had an apartment or office in Arab Jerusalem could join the talks, so long as they were registered in the territories.

In Washington, the State Department had no immediate comment on the television report.

Shamir's reported acceptance of the U.S. formula came two days after Baker enraged him by saying Washington would not give aid to resettle Soviet Jewish immigrants unless Israel promised to halt Jewish settlement of the occupied areas.

The State Department backtracked on Friday, saying aid would be forthcoming if Israel provided assurances similar to those given for annual U.S. aid, such as promising not to use the funds in the occupied areas.

Diplomatic and official sources in Washington had said the State Department explanation might have come too late to rescue Baker's efforts to arrange the Cairo talks.

Shamir called Baker's remarks "inflammatory."

Kabul appeals to Arab leaders

KUWAIT (AP) — Afghan President Najibullah has appealed to the leaders of Saudi Arabia and Kuwait to mediate a peaceful settlement in his war-torn country, the Al Sayassah daily reported Saturday. It quoted him as promising in an interview to release foreign captives if their governments requested it and to facilitate visit by Arab families to men captured fighting with Afghan rebels. "Subject to approval of the Saudi monarch King Fahd, we are ready to go to Saudi Arabia and sit at the negotiating table near the Grand Mosque of Mecca with the opposition groups, with the aim of resolving our differences in accordance with Islamic teachings," Najibullah said. Saudi Arabia is a staunch supporter of the Mujahedeen rebels. The rebels have fought on seeking to overthrow Najibullah and set up an Islamic state. Saudi Arabia, despite the absence of diplomatic ties with Moscow, hosted a meeting in December 1988 between Soviet and Mujahedeen representatives. Najibullah said that he made the proposal for talks a year ago at a meeting of Islamic spiritual leaders in Kabul, "but we did not receive any positive response." Saudi Arabia was the first country to extend recognition to the rebels' provisional government.

Deputies air diverse views on Soviet influx

By Salameh Ne'matt
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — The Lower House of Parliament, in a closed session Saturday, heard a report on the respective stands of all parties concerned with the issue of Soviet Jewish immigration to Israel and the occupied territories, and political blocs in the House presented several views on how to deal with the problem.

Parliamentary sources told the Jordan Times that Foreign Minister Marwan Al Qasem outlined the respective stands of the Arab states, the U.S., the Soviet Union, European states and the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) vis-a-vis the influx of Soviet Jews into the occupied territories.

Addressing the closed session, the second in one week, Qasem underlined the European position which he said was "more advanced" on the issue than most states concerned, according to the sources.

Discussing Saturday's House session, Speaker Suleiman Arar told the Jordan News Agency, Petra, that Qasem reviewed the current political situation and

Jordan's policy towards current issues, and the deputies expressed views and made enquiries about the dangers threatening Jordan and the region.

Prime Minister Badran, Arar said, later answered deputies' questions. The prime minister "reviewed the political situation in the region as well as the Arab and international position toward the current issues," Arar told Petra.

According to sources who spoke to the Jordan Times, the foreign minister sparked a debate during the seven-hour session, when he reported that a Soviet radio station, beaming to Israel, expressed the opinion that Arab states were "unnecessarily exaggerating" the problem. "Even if it (the immigration) resulted in the settlement of Jews in the occupied territories,"

Communist Deputy Issa Mdanat, responding to the commentary, was quoted as saying that although he did not doubt Qasem's report, "I would have liked to see the foreign minister ask our ambassador in Moscow about the reality of the Soviet

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Church threat brings uneasy Beirut truce

BEIRUT (Agencies) — The ultimate church threat of excommunication has brought at least a temporary halt to a bloody war between Lebanon's Christians in which about 800 people have died in the past month.

Exhausted—civilians emerged from dank shelters Saturday to survey the ruins of homes blasted by a power struggle between army General Michel Aoun's troops and the Lebanese Forces (LF) militia headed by Samir Geagea.

The battle for control of the Christian enclave erupted on January 31 when Aoun demanded that the LF disarm and disband. Geagea has vowed to fight to the death to maintain his militia.

Patriarch Nasrallah Butros Sfeir, head of the Maronite Church to which Aoun, Geagea and most of their followers belong, threatened Friday to excommunicate the Christian leaders and their troops unless the war ended.

"They will be expelled from the church body and prevented burial according to church rites," said Sfeir, invoking the supreme sanction of the church in his 13th plea for peace.

However, convoys of civilians fled the enclave north of Beirut

Saturday as sniper fire crackled around them despite a ceasefire in the power struggle that has driven one-fifth of the zone's one million inhabitants from their homes.

Police said civil defence teams evacuated 12 dead and 26 wounded from the battered districts of Nabaa and Sin A'fil during the night after savage fighting subsided into sniper duels.

That raised the overall casualty toll since the battles began to at least 766 killed and 2,087 wounded.

Police said relative calm prevailed over east Beirut since 9 p.m. (1900 GMT) Friday when the ceasefire called by Sfeir took effect.

Long lines of cars and pickups piled high with mattresses, clothes, and household goods snaked out of east Beirut for the relative safety of the north, the eastern Bekaa Valley and the southern provinces.

Political sources said the latest battles dealt Aoun a heavy blow and gained little ground.

"I believe Aoun is finished, militarily and perhaps even politically," one diplomat told Reuters. "They have to find a way out for him. Of course, he may decide to fight on but the army is in bad shape and sick of it."

Serving Romanian ministers 'involved in killings'

TIMISOARA, Romania (AP) — The chief defendant at the trial of 21 officers of deposed dictator Nicolae Ceausescu's dreaded Securitate secret police testified Saturday that the current defence and interior ministers were sent to Timisoara to help suppress December's popular revolt.

Major-General Emil Macri, a Securitate department head, told the court that units under his command did not participate in putting down the revolution that ended Ceausescu's 24-year iron-fisted rule.

The revolt began in this western city Dec. 16. The violent suppression of demonstrations sparked nationwide reaction, and eventually spread to the capital

Bucharest, 400 kilometres to the east, toppling Ceausescu Dec. 22. He and his wife Elena were summarily tried and executed three days later on charges including genocide against as many as 60,000 people during their harsh rule.

Macri repeatedly denied he had any role in ordering the security forces to fire upon demonstrators claiming that the Securitate was not even issued arms in the first days of the uprising.

On Friday, the chief prosecutor revealed that 94 people died and 300 were injured in the revolutionary violence here. Another 20 went missing.

"I was sent to Timisoara on

Dec. 17, by (former Securitate chief) Gen. Iulian Vlad, exclusively to find out whether there were any foreign spies inciting the people to rise up against the regime," Macri told the court, adding that he was accompanied in his mission by 15 counter-intelligence officers from Bucharest.

Ceausescu had condemned the Timisoara protests as a "campaign" from abroad.

Macri and six others are accused of "committing genocide" and face life imprisonment if convicted.

The 14 other defendants could go to jail for up to 20 years if convicted on lesser charges of "assisting genocide" for trying to

organise resistance to the revolt, facilitate the escape of two generals and conceal 40 of the 94 deaths by sending bodies to Bucharest for cremation.

Macri was the first to give testimony. The other 20 defendants were ordered to leave the courtroom by presiding judge, Colonel Cornel Badoiu.

Macri told the court that Col. Gen. Victor Stanculescu, who was appointed defence minister just last month, was sent to Timisoara Dec. 17, to assist Ion Coman, a former politburo member responsible for the army and police, who was sent to the city to quash the revolt. Coman is to be tried later in Bucharest.

PAC rules out talks with Pretoria

HARARE (Agencies) — The radical Pan-Africanist Congress (PAC) of South Africa Saturday ruled out peace negotiations with Pretoria and vowed to step up the armed struggle to achieve black majority rule.

PAC Foreign Affairs Secretary Gora Ebrahim told a news conference that the group had agreed at a meeting in Zimbabwe with the Pan Africanist Movement (PAM), a loose alliance of internal political groups opposed to apartheid, that Pretoria had not yet met conditions for negotiations.

"The PAC and PAM have agreed that as of now there is no basis for negotiations. The state of emergency is still in force, the regime's troops are still in the black townships and the regime still detains political prisoners," he said.

President F.W. de Klerk last month lifted a long-standing ban on the PAC along with Nelson Mandela's larger African National Congress (ANC) and the South African Communist Party.

Mandela plans to meet de Klerk soon for talks and the ANC is to move its headquarters back to South Africa.

But Ebrahim said the PAC would step up armed struggle to force Pretoria to the negotiating table and accused de Klerk of trying to "liquidate the liberation movements and to undermine international sanctions by introduc-

ing half reforms."

"We were not fighting in order to be legalised. The PAC was formed to contest power in the country," Ebrahim said.

Mandela compared to Christ

In Lusaka, Mandela heard himself compared to Jesus Christ Saturday when he visited the Zambian capital's civic centre to be honoured by his hosts.

"Like it was with Jesus when he was crucified, his persecutors believed they were putting an end to his fame. Alas they did not realise that his name was to become famous worldwide. You have done exactly that, not for yourself but your country and

mankind," District Governor Rupiah Banda told him.

Mandela, thanking his hosts for a silver key and scroll, replied: "You are granting me the freedom of the city. Yet in my own city of Johannesburg I do not have a vote in the city council elections."

"It is shameful that in this day and age blacks do not even have a vote in local government elections."

Mandela told the crowd, including Zambia's President Kenneth Kaunda, that even when his ANC returned home to a new headquarters in Johannesburg, "part of us will always remain behind."

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Donors divert food aid to rebel areas of Ethiopia through Sudan

KHARTOUM (R) — Western donors are now diverting Ethiopia's food aid shipments to neighbouring Sudan for distribution on the side of Ethiopian rebels, diplomats and relief workers said.

This started when Ethiopian rebels seized the strategic northern port of Massawa last month, paralysing famine relief operations in government-held areas, they said.

The diplomats said the United States, which originally pledged to donate 50,000 tonnes of food aid for distribution in rebel-held areas, was now likely to double this commitment.

An official estimated 4.5 million people face starvation in northern Ethiopia this year because of drought and civil war. Most of the victims are in Eritrea and the adjacent Tigray provinces.

But the fall of Massawa, confirmed by foreign relief workers who have visited the port with Eritrean People's Liberation Front (EPLF) rebels, has closed the last gateway for shipping food aid directly to government-held areas.

It has also disrupted a plan for church relief agencies to truck food aid from Massawa across the military lines to Tigray.

Donors originally planned to ship 370,000 tonnes of grain to Massawa for distribution in both Eritrea and Tigray but the diplo-

mats said many shipments were now being quietly diverted to Port Sudan for delivery to relief agencies operating on the rebel side of the lines.

Last week, for instance, one ship carrying 27,000 tonnes of U.S. grain to Massawa was re-routed to Port Sudan, they said.

The diplomats and relief workers said Western governments preferred to avoid dealing directly with the rebels by channelling their aid through independent charities such as the Lutheran World Relief.

From Port Sudan the food aid begins a slow and difficult journey by truck to distribution centres. The trucks travel by night to avoid air attack along rough tracks through mountains and take a week or more to complete the round trip.

Ethiopia's Soviet-backed government has protested that such cross-border operations violated its sovereignty.

But many relief officials see them as vital for saving hundreds of thousands of people in rebel-held areas who would otherwise starve to death or make their way to refugee camps in Sudan.

Up to one million people starved to death in northern Ethiopia during the 1984-85 because the international community failed to provide food aid in time.

Then and during the drought of 1987-88 most of the needy could

be reached from government-held towns.

But over the last two years the rebels have greatly extended the territory under their control, putting hundreds of thousands if not millions of people beyond the reach of relief organisations operating on the government side.

The EPLF holds all of northern and western Eritrea as well as Massawa and its ally, the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF), controls all of Tigray and large areas of neighbouring Wollo and Gondar provinces.

Relief agencies linked to the EPLF and TPLF are buying new trucks and hiring others to carry the increased flow of food aid into their areas.

Ethiopia announces changes

Meanwhile, in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia's Marxist rulers said Saturday they had charted a new strategy for the country's future progress and development.

Diplomats and Ethiopian exiles in other East African countries contacted by Reuters in Nairobi have speculated for weeks that the ruling Workers Party of Ethiopia (WPE) was about to dump its philosophy as part of its search for a solution to the country's civil war and economic crisis.

The official Ethiopian News Agency (ENA) made no refer-

ence to any change in the WPE's commitment to socialism. But it said the party's politburo, chaired by President Mengistu Haile Mariam, had recommended sweeping changes in the party's policies at a meeting Friday.

"An appropriate strategy has been charted out during the discussions of the political bureau based on the objective conditions in the country and taking into account the prevailing situation in the world," ENA said.

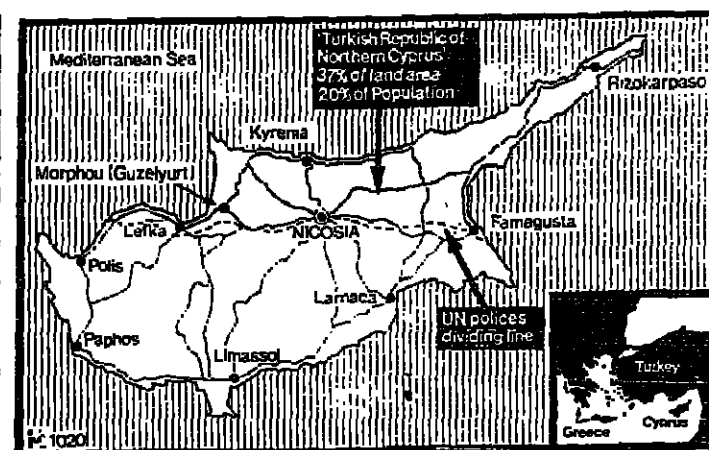
The politburo deliberated on "the nature and mission of the party, the economic system and generally on the country's future."

The agency gave no details of the recommendations but said they would be put to a Central Committee meeting soon.

This is the first time the WPE has announced a rethink of its ideology since it was founded in 1984.

Mengistu has anchored his country ideologically and politically to the Soviet Union since coming to power in 1977. However, the government has quietly introduced a number of economic reforms in the past two years to ease state controls on the economy and promote private enterprise.

The reassessment of ideology comes as the government faces fresh military setbacks in its war against rebels in the north and a new threat of famine.



Cyprus talks break down over self-determination

UNITED NATIONS (R) — Week-long talks between Cypriot President George Vassiliou and Turkish Cypriot leader Rauf Denktash on reunifying their divided island broke down over the issue of self-determination.

"The talks did not produce anything. As a matter of fact, there have been no talks, there have been no negotiations," Vassiliou told a news conference after a final meeting with Denktash and United Nations Secretary General Javier Perez de Cuellar Friday.

"There has been simply a number of meetings, which could not lead to anything because of the preconditions imposed by the other side."

Vassiliou said the main stumbling block was Denktash's insistence for the first time that the Turkish Cypriots be considered a people, with the right of self-determination, instead of a community, as designated by the U.N. Security Council under whose mandate the secretary general was acting.

Denktash's aim, he said, was not to form a federation, but to achieve recognition for the Turkish Cypriot state proclaimed in 1983 with himself as president.

The state, recognised only by Turkey, comprises the 37 per cent of the island occupied by Turkish troops since 1974 when the military junta then ruling Greece engineered a short-lived coup in Nicosia.

Denktash told reporters as he left U.N. headquarters that the Greek Cypriot side rejected "the claim for equal rights, the right to decide our future."

"You cannot talk federation if there is no right to self-determination," he said.

The Greek Cypriot side "still prefers to sail under the flag of the Republic of Cyprus, when they know they don't represent

both peoples, rather than share power with us."

Vassiliou said neither the Turkish Cypriots nor the Greek Cypriots had the right of self-determination, only the Cypriot people as a whole.

If communities had that right, "the world as we know it would collapse" and the United Nations would not have some 160 members "but probably 16, 000 or 160,000... we would go back to the middle ages."

He quoted from a statement which the secretary general read to both leaders saying the introduction by Denktash of "terminology that is different from that used by the Security Council has... posed more than a semantic problem."

"In the circumstances, I have come to the conclusion, regrettably, that we face an impasse of a substantive kind, which raises questions regarding the essence of the mandate of good offices given to me by the Security Council and, therefore, regarding the basis of the talks."

Because of the dispute over self-determination, sources close to the talks said, the two leaders failed to follow a work programme proposed by the secretary general aimed at drafting the outline of an agreement on the basis of the results of previous talks dating back to August 1988.

Vassiliou said although he was disappointed, he was not giving up and would continue efforts to achieve agreement on a federation. He also said he was sending a message of friendship to the Turkish Cypriots.

Denktash also appeared to leave the door open, saying: "We now go back to Cyprus... we'll see whether we shall start again."

The next step will be for the secretary general to report back to the Security Council.

Rafsanjani urges increased production in face of protests

NICOSIA (AP) — Iranian President Hashemi Rafsanjani's office Saturday set up a 24-hour hotline to handle complaints about economic hardships which have resulted in protest demonstrations.

Tehran Radio gave two numbers where callers could voice complaints or give suggestions. Sources in Tehran reported a number of angry protests last week sparked by popular resentment over continued economic hardships faced by Iranians.

Rafsanjani Saturday admitted "we currently do not have political, cultural or military difficulties. Our difficulties are mostly from a shortage of production," the radio reported.

Rafsanjani said "what will save the country is that consumer goods are produced inside the country, and are offered to the people at a reasonable price."

He said in January that factories were operating at 40 per cent of capacity.

Iranians are contending with soaring inflation, shortages of almost all basic commodities, and high unemployment — all spillovers of the 8-year war with Iraq which devastated the country's economic infrastructure.

There has been no mention of protest demonstrations on the

state-run radio, television or Islamic Republic News Agency (IRNA), monitored in Nicosia.

Opposition groups, including the Iraq-based Mujahadeen Khalq, have reported large protests in all major cities. The Mujahadeen Khalq said security forces killed several hundred protesters.

The reports could not be independently confirmed.

But Tehran residents have given credible reports by phone that sporadic protests did take place. They declined to give details.

Since his election in July, Rafsanjani has tried to boost the private sector in an effort to tap potential investments, and encourage foreign investment to revitalize the economy. But his efforts have been frustrated by radicals inside the Tehran hierarchy who advocate a totally nationalised industry and oppose foreign investment.

For weeks the radical-dominated parliament blocked Rafsanjani's five-year plan to revive the economy through foreign investment and privatisation of inefficient industries. They reluctantly approved it last month after a severe warning from the spiritual leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei.

ADC urges dismissal of Baker aide over watered down report on Israel

WASHINGTON (Agencies) — American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee (ADC) President Abdeen Jabara sent letters to President George Bush and Secretary of State James Baker renewing his request that Assistant Secretary of State for Humanitarian Affairs Richard Schifter be relieved of his duties in the wake of reports that the latter watered down criticism of Israeli human rights abuses in the 1990 State Department Report on Human Rights and that he briefed Jewish American leaders about the report while denying their Arab-American counterparts equal access.

Charging Schifter, the founding president of the pro-Israel Jewish Institute for National Security Affairs (JINSA), with an "unconscionable abuse of office and a serious conflict of interest," Jabara requested that Bush and Baker dismiss Schifter on grounds of violation of public trust.

"At a time when there is incredible daily suffering by the Palestinian civilian population, it is simply unacceptable that a U.S. government official place the interests of Israel above those of honesty and objectivity," Jabara said.

Referring to information contained in a Washington Post column by Jack Anderson (Human Rights Report Iks Israel Again), Jabara stated that "Mr. Schifter's

willingness to 'diffuse criticism of Israel' by ignoring 'dozens of well-researched, classified reports' by Jerusalem Council General Philip Wilcox is clear evidence of his unsuitability for public office. The fact that he secretly briefed Jewish American leaders while ignoring their counterparts in the Arab-American community adds insult to injury. The assistant secretary's past association with JINSA simply provides the context for an intolerable pattern of bias and abuse of authority."

Jabara also sent a letter of protest to every member of both Houses of Congress calling for an urgent inquiry into Schifter's conduct with respect to the Israeli selection of the State Department report. He also urged support for public hearings on Israeli human rights practices in the occupied territories.

Calling this year's report on Israeli abuses "an apparent travesty," Jabara noted that ADC had cooperated fully with the State Department in the preparation of the 1988 report but had been denied equal access to the findings of this year's report.

Assessing the Arab-Americans have suffered increased human and civil rights abuses in the occupied territories during the past two years, Jabara argued that "it logically follows that we have a priority interest in the State Department's report."

15 injured in attack by militants in Egyptian town

ASSIUT, Egypt (AP) — Scores of fundamentalist Muslim militants stoned two Coptic Christian churches and a youth club in a southern Egyptian town, injuring 15 people, a town official said Saturday.

The state-run Middle East news agency distributed a report making no mention of those attacks but saying the militants burned a Coptic-owned candy plant, a neighbouring timber depot and four cars.

The town official said the attacks occurred at Abu-Kurkas, 240 kilometres south of Cairo in Al Minya province. Al Minya lies just north of Assiut, which has experienced frequent episodes of violence from Muslim militants for almost a decade.

The official, who spoke on condition of anonymity, said almost 100 militants threw stones in the attacks on churches and a nearby Coptic youth club, smashing windows and slightly injuring 15 worshippers.

He said the assaults came during Coptic prayer services customarily held during a 55-day period of fasting preceding Coptic Easter, which this year coincides with Western Easter on April 15.

The official said police detained 45 attackers and were looking for another 45.

Police Maj.-Gen. Maher Has-

san Ibrahim, Al Minya's provincial security chief, referred questions to the Interior Ministry in Cairo, which is responsible for internal security. The ministry spokesman's office also refused to discuss the incident but said a statement might be issued later.

The government news agency report, which appeared to be an Interior Ministry handout, blamed the trouble on "members of extremist groups," the ministry's standard euphemism for Muslim militants. It put the number of detainees at 37.

The agency said militants last week abducted the son of the candy plant owner "on suspicion of having a love affair with a Muslim girl." It said a friend of the son also was kidnapped with him.

The agency identified the factory owner as Saad Habib Sideir, but did not give the son's name. Quoting Interior Ministry sources, it said Friday's arson attack followed the arrest of the alleged kidnappers and release of the two captives.

In Cairo, the state-owned newspaper Al Gomhuria reported the attackers tried unsuccessfully to set fire to the churches. "Security authorities brought the situation under control," the newspaper said without specifying how.

Arafat to visit Malaysia

KUALA LUMPUR (R) — Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat will start a three-day official visit to Malaysia Monday, Malaysian Prime Minister Mahathir Mohammad told reporters Saturday.

"We will receive him as the Palestinian president," Mahathir said.

The visit to Malaysia is Arafat's first in his capacity as president of the Palestinian state.

Arafat, chairman of the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) met Mahathir officially in the Malaysian capital, Kuala Lumpur, this week at a gathering to honour freed South African black leader Nelson Mandela.

Mahathir said he would hold talks with Arafat on Palestinian problems. In a separate statement, the Foreign Ministry said Arafat's visit would strengthen bilateral ties.

Arafat is expected to brief Mahathir on the latest developments in the Middle East, particularly the issue of Israeli-occupied territories, the official Bernama news agency quoted the statement as saying.

Malaysia was one of the first countries to recognise Palestine as a state. In January, 1989, it elevated the status of the PLO office in Kuala Lumpur to embassy.

China denies arms deal talks with Iran

BAGHDAD (R) — Chinese Foreign Minister Qian Qichen, ending a three-day visit to Iraq, said Saturday that reports of recent arms deals between his country and Iran were "completely baseless."

Asked by reporters to comment on the reports, he said talks between China and Iran had not touched on the subject and were centred on scientific and technological cooperation only.

"The arms trade must be limited within the safe of weapons

for self-defence... and must help to achieve stability and peace in the region," he said.

Peking supplied Iran with Silk-worm missiles and other weapons during its 1980-88 war with Iraq.

Qian met Iraqi President Saddam Hussein, Foreign Minister Tariq Aziz and Deputy Prime Minister Saadoun Hammadi for discussions on improving economic relations.

"Both sides had expressed a strong desire to continue relations of friendship and cooperation

tion, despite the presence of some difficulties in the exchange of economic and trade relations," he said.

He did not elaborate but said a joint committee meeting in April would tackle the problems.

Chinese firms last year signed contracts with Iraq worth more than \$50 million, mainly for railways and roads.

Qian said his talks also covered the exodus of Soviet Jews to Israel, which has alarmed the Arab World.

"We are against Israeli measures to settle Soviet Jews in the occupied territories, because that will be a blow for the Middle East peace efforts and the whole peace process," he said.

Israel says there is no policy of settling the migrants in the territories.

Qian later arrived in North Yemen on the second leg of his tour which will also take him to South Yemen, Qatar and Bahrain.

Sana'a, Aden to merge central banks, media

ADEN (R) — North and South Yemen will merge their central banks, media and other institutions in the first practical step towards unity due to be achieved in November.

The Aden News Agency said Saturday the agreement was reached in two days of talks in the border town of Ta'izz between Prime Ministers Abdul Aziz Abdul Ghani of the North and Yassen Said No'man of the South.

It quoted a joint statement as saying they agreed "to merge similar institutions in both Yemens as part of the transitional phase before announcing the single Yemen on Nov. 30."

The statement gave no date for merging central banks, ports, customs, posts and communications

and media.

But it said flights by Yemen Airways of the North and Alyemna of the South to Aden and Sana'a would be regarded as domestic as of March.

Non-Yemeni nationals were free to travel in both countries on visas issued by either state, it added.

Officials from South Yemen and North Yemen have been meeting to pave the way for unity since last November.

Officials told Reuters the latest mergers were the first steps towards uniting the foreign affairs, defence and trade ministries.

Finance ministers will work out a united budget for 1991, the statement said.

It said the Red Sea port of Aden would continue to play its

"financial, economic and commercial role in the united Yemen."

South Yemeni officials have said they were seeking foreign investment to revive the port.

Under the draft constitution, Sana'a was declared the capital of a united Yemen.

The statement said both countries agreed to coordinate their foreign trade by unifying sources of imports and benefiting from previous pacts signed by either country.

Meanwhile, leaders of 600 South Yemeni doctors and pharmacists, on strike since Monday for better pay and medical equipment, said Saturday they would not go back till the health minister was sacked.

"We will not end the strike until all our demands, foremost among which is the sacking of the minister, are met," union leader Abdo Salem told Reuters.

The stoppage is the latest in a series which have gripped the state in the past two months.

Union leaders accuse Health Minister Said Sharaf of appointing friends and relatives to top ministry positions and being to blame for deteriorating health services.

"We can no longer accept the present health conditions which have deteriorated to such a level that is forcing our (skilled) medical staff to leave the country," they said in a statement.

They are expected to meet South Yemeni President Haider Abu Bakr Al-Atas Monday, officials said.

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Paper suggests U.S.-Iran talks

NICOSIA (R) — An Iranian newspaper suggested Saturday that if Western hostages in Lebanon were freed, Iran and the United States could improve relations with another prisoner release deal.

Kayhan International said that if Tehran and Washington wanted improved ties "in the post-hostage era" they could negotiate the release of two Americans jailed in Iran in exchange for three black Muslims jailed in the United States.

"If we are correct in assuming that Washington and Tehran are talking about ending one phase of the Lebanese debacle, then we suggest if those negotiations are successfully completed, someone

pay attention to releasing the Americans mentioned herein, in the U.S. and Iran," the Iranian News Agency (IRNA) quoted the hardline English-language paper as saying.

"Perhaps this is a sufficient pretext for the Reverend Jesse Jackson to visit Tehran, or maybe even (former U.S. Attorney General) Ramsey Clark. Both would be better," the paper said.

It identified the Americans jailed in Iran as David Rabhan, a friend of former U.S. President Jimmy Carter who has been in prison for 10 years, and "self-confessed CIA operative" John Patis.

It named the three black American Muslims, who it said

were the victims of Racism, as Dhoruba Al Mujahid, Geronimo Pratt and Khalifa Hammas Abdul Khalis.

Kayhan said American Muslims were of concern to Iran because the Islamic Republic says it is mandated to protect Muslims and the oppressed wherever they are.

A senior Muslim militia official in Beirut told Reuters Wednesday that the United States and Iran had had secret talks on releasing eight U.S. hostages.

U.S. President George Bush denied Thursday that Washington was conducting secret talks with Tehran, which backs the Hizbollah group believed to be holding most of the 17 Western

hostages.

In the last few weeks Iran's top judge, the pro-government Tehran Times newspaper and an influential pro-Iranian Muslim cleric in Lebanon have all denounced hostage-taking.

IRNA quoted Kayhan as saying Rabhan was jailed because of Carter's "indiscretion" in making direct telephone call to his "boyhood friend" during the U.S. embassy hostage crisis in the last 15 months of Carter's presidency.

It said Rabhan "was an agro-industrialist who had invested some \$16 million in Iran before the revolution. He stayed on (in Iran) and it is said he had even converted to Islam."

JORDAN TIMES DAILY GUIDE AND CALENDAR

JORDAN TELEVISION

Tel: 773111-19

PROGRAMME ONE

15:30 Koran
15:45 Programme review
15:55 Children programme
17:10 Football
18:00 News summary in Arabic
18:05 Local programme
18:20 Cultural programme
19:00 Local programme
19:40 Programme review
20:00 News in Arabic
20:30 Arabic series
21:30 Programme review
21:40 Local programme
22:40 Varieties programme
23:00 News summary in Arabic

PROGRAMME TWO

17:50 Tel Pere Tel Film
18:15 L'ecole de fans
19:00 News in French
19:15 Auport/Hui en France
19:30 News in Hebrew
19:45 Varieties programme
20:00 News in Arabic
20:30 What's the Boss?
21:30 Women in Politics: "Corazon Aquino"
22:00 News in English
22:20 Best Seller: "The Bourne Identity"

PRAYER TIMES

04:30 Fair

CHURCHES

St. Mary of Nazareth Church Swatfah, Tel. 810740

Assembly of God Church, Tel. 711331

St. Joseph Church Tel. 624990

Church of the Annunciation Tel. 637440

De la Salle Church Tel. 661757

Terrace Church Tel. 622366

Church of the Annunciation Tel. 623541

Anglican Church Tel. 625383, Tel. 628543

Armenian Catholic Church Tel. 711331

Armenian Orthodox Church Tel. 712611

St. Ephraim Church Tel. 717551

Armenian International Church Tel. 685326

Evangelical Lutheran Church Tel. 811295

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints Tel. 815817 and 654932

WEATHER

Bulletin supplied by the Department of Meteorology

It will be warm and windy will be southeasterly moderate. In Aqaba, winds will be northerly moderate and seas calm.

Min./Max. temp. 6 / 17

Aqaba 12 / 26

Deserts 4 / 19

Jordan Valley 11 / 24

Yesterday's high temperatures: Amman 45 per cent, Aqaba 28 per cent.

Hamzeh indirectly blames NMI for Karak hospital delay

By Abdullah Nsour
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Former Health Minister Zaid Hamzeh has indirectly blamed the National Medical Institution (NMI) for the delay in building a new hospital planned in Karak as a gift from the Italian government.

Hamzeh said in an interview with the Jordan Times that the Italian government had allocated \$12 million for the construction and furnishing of the 200-bed hospital and arranged with the Jordanian government to set up the infrastructure to pave the way for construction work to begin.

This was agreed in 1986 and was followed by a visit to Jordan by a team of Italian technicians and experts to study the project, Hamzeh noted. He

said the Italians prepared the designs for the hospital in the following year and submitted them to the Health Ministry in Amman, which allocated JD 400,000 for the infrastructure to be laid as a first stage.

Documents for tenders were prepared by the ministry at a cost of JD 1,700, and it was thought that the infrastructure would be completed within three months. "But now we are in 1990 and neither the infrastructure nor the building itself is ready," Hamzeh said.

The former minister said the NMI, which has taken over from the Health Ministry certain amendments to the Italian designs and this has angered the Italian ambassador and could have been the reason behind the present delay.

"I was surprised to hear that the NMI has raised the cost of

the infrastructure to JD 900,000 due to the introduction of plans for the installation of an electronic telephone exchange in addition to water, electricity and telephone networks in the original plans for the infrastructure," Hamzeh said.

"Parliament members from Karak Governorate who have been wondering about the delay should know the facts and should also realise that the NMI, which has an annual budget of JD 54.5 million, has so far failed to even lay the infrastructure for the hospital," Hamzeh said.

At the time of the announcement of the hospital project it was said that it could be sufficient for Karak's needs until the year 2000. It was also announced that the old Italian hospital in Karak would be



Zaid Hamzeh

supplied with new equipment from Italy to improve and raise the standard of its services.

According to Hamzeh, he visited the government hospital in Karak in 1985 and found that it was "old fashioned, and beyond repair." He said that as health minister then he sought to secure the Italian help which came in an agreement that provides for the hospital project as a gift for the people of Jordan. But, he said, he regretted that the project has today failed to materialise.

Arab groups to review Palestinian situation

AMMAN (Petra) — Meetings of Arab Human Rights Organisation and Arab ministers of health to be held in Tunis and Cairo respectively on Wednesday will discuss Arab Palestinian rights and the general health conditions of the Palestinian people in the occupied territories, according to Dr. Hassan Khreis, secretary general of the Arab Doctors Union.

Khreis said in a statement Saturday that the three-day meeting in Tunis would discuss Zionist practices in the occupied lands as well as legislation pertaining to human rights in the Arab World. The Arab Human Rights Orga-

nisation, he said, is composed of a group of Arab voluntary organisations advocating human rights and follows up matters related to legislation on human rights and civil defence questions in Arab countries.

According to Khreis, Arab health ministers who will meet in Cairo will look into the health situation in the occupied lands and services offered by the Palestine Red Crescent Society and Arab organisations. The Cairo meeting will also look into questions related to pharmaceutical production in the Arab World and Palestine's request to join the World Health Organisation.

Jordan, Syria boost industry coordination

AMMAN (J.T.) — Jordan and Syria Saturday signed the minutes of their meetings paving the way for more coordination in industry-related fields and charting a plan for joint cooperation in the production and marketing of products.

The two sides agreed to begin unifying standards and specifications for 10 industrial commodities, according to Petra. It said that the two sides reviewed progress in joint industrial schemes and took several decisions concerning these industries, which included the carpet and pesticides industries. They also agreed that priority should be given to marketing white cement, which they jointly produce, and to work on finding new markets for the cement.

The talks came under the joint Syrian-Jordanian industry coordination committee co-chaired by the two ministers.

The Jordan News Agency, Petra, said the minutes include agreements designed to boost industrial cooperation between Jordan and Syria.

The two sides agreed to prepare lists of requirements for industrial production including primary materials used in industry and semi-finished industrial products. They also agreed to cooperate in using all their resources for improving industrial production, and to exchange expertise and information related to industrial engineering designs and industrial projects and feasibility studies that precede such projects.

Following the signing of the minutes, Jubran said in a statement that the signing was in line with resolutions taken by the Joint Jordanian-Syrian Higher Committee in Amman recently.

Jubran said that these steps can only lead to Jordanian-Syrian industrial integration, a main aim of the joint committee. The Syrian minister lauded bilateral economic trade and commercial cooperation. He said the two sides were determined to boost bilateral cooperation at all levels.

Civil aviation centre named regional centre

AMMAN (Petra) — The Queen Noor Civil Aviation Technical College in Amman has been authorised by the International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO) to serve as a regional Middle East training centre, according to Mahmud Jamal Balqaz, director-general of the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA).

He said that ICAO has informed the Civil Aviation Authority that as of this year the college will be authorised to prepare programmes for training through its facilities.

The Amman centre will be one of four world training regional centres which will be entrusted with providing training and information on civil aviation, and

maintenance of equipment used in air navigation and communications, Balqaz said.

He said the decision was taken following a series of visits by ICAO officials and experts to the Amman college and visits by CAA officials to the ICAO centres in Canada and the United States to familiarise themselves with the various training programmes which will be adopted at the Amman regional centre.

According to Balqaz, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) has been providing the college with considerable amount of technical assistance over the past two decades to improve its training programmes.

(Continued from page 1)

position. Midant quoted a senior Soviet official, whom he said was "close to (Soviet President Mikhail) Gorbachev," as saying that the immigration of Soviet Jews was more of an embarrassment to Moscow than to the Arab World, according to the sources. He explained that the exodus of Soviet Jews was a problem of theirs as well, in the sense that it contradicts the atmosphere of openness and indicates the dissatisfaction of their own citizens, the sources said.

Deputy Abdul Hafiz 'Alawi, speaking on behalf of the Islamic Bloc, reportedly lashed out at the Soviet Union which he said always adopted the policy of forcing

the migration of minorities such as Muslims and Circassians. He was quoted as saying: "We can see for ourselves some of those who were victims of this policy here in this House." (He pointed to Sheikh Abdul Baqi Jammo, a Chichin), according to the sources.

Soviet Jewish immigration is part of the Soviet Union's long-standing policy of maintaining hegemony over the republics. 'Alawi was quoted as saying in an apparent reference to Muslim Azerbaijan which is seeking independence from the Soviet Union.

Deputy Hisham Sharari, speaking on behalf of the 19-member "National Bloc," expressed a view sympathetic to the official stand but launched an

WHAT'S GOING ON

The following listings are compiled from monthly bulletins and the daily Arabic press. Readers are advised to verify the listed time and place with the concerned institutions.

EXHIBITIONS

★ Exhibition of oils and watercolours by Jordanian artist Yusef Baddawi at the gallery, Hotel Jordan Inter-Continental — 9:00 a.m. - 7:00 p.m.

★ Exhibition by Jordanian artist Hassan Jalal at the Royal Cultural Centre.

FILM

★ A feature film entitled "All About Eve" at the American Centre — 7:00 p.m.

Jordan urges Islamic protection for Palestinian education institutions

AMMAN (J.T.) — Jordan has appealed to the Islamic World to consider the consequences of Israel's practices against Palestinian educational institutions in the occupied Arab territories and the danger posed to the young generation who are being deprived of basic education at their early age.

Dr. Mohammad Hamdan, head of the Jordanian delegation to the meetings on "Education for All" in Thailand, called on the Islamic World to help fend off the danger of Israel's practices, which he said, "are directed against not only the Palestinian people but also all Islamic countries and Arab states," and to provide all possible assistance to the Palestinians.

Hamdan was addressing the

opening of a meeting by the Islamic Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (ISESCO), which opened in Thailand Saturday.

The three-day meeting comes just before the opening of the United Nations-sponsored international conference on "Education for All" which is due to open in the Thai city of Juntien on March 5.

Jordan calls on the Islamic World to adopt joint action designed to provide protection to the Islamic identity and Islamic culture in the face of the cultural invasion represented by the Zionist occupation to take other necessary action in line with the principles and objectives of the

Organisation of Islamic Conference (OIC)," Hamdan said.

Hamdan, minister of education and higher education, told OIC's 37 representatives gathered to discuss an ISESCO programme for the eradication of illiteracy in Arab and Islamic states urged the delegates to endorse a declaration by the U.N. international conference on education for all. The eradication of illiteracy programme, Hamdan said, will be submitted to the international conference as an important document for the Islamic World.

The programme, he said, reflects the Islamic World's views on basic educational rights and presents aspirations of the Islamic countries to achieve social justice

and equality in educational opportunities and training and in safeguarding human dignity.

The Jordanian delegation will deliver His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan's message to the conference in which he outlines various aspects of education in the Arab World.

United Nations statistics show that about 62 million of the 200 million people living in the Arab World are illiterate.

United Nations agencies sponsoring the conference include the United Nations Children's Fund, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation, the United Nations Development Programme and the World Bank.

Indian speaker reaffirms support for Palestinians

AMMAN (Petra) — Speaker of India's Parliament Rabi Ray Saturday called for a just solution for the Arab-Israeli conflict taking into account the rights of the Palestinian people in their homeland and their right to an independent state.

Ray, who arrived earlier in the day on a visit, was speaking at a meeting with Lower House of Parliament Speaker Suleiman Arar, with whom he discussed Jordanian-Indian relations and ways to boost cooperation.

The Palestine question was discussed at the meeting and Arar dwelt in-depth on Jordan's concern over the influx of Jews into occupied Palestine. Ray said his

country supports human rights. India is also keen to bolster Jordanian-Indian relations in economic and parliamentary fields.

Several House members attended the meeting.

In an arrival statement, Ray paid tribute to the "firm and historical relations" linking Jordan and India, and called for bolstering economic ties between the two countries.

In a press statement he made upon arrival, Ray said that his talks in Amman would deal with parliamentary, cultural, and economic ties as well as political and parliamentary life in Jordan.

Ray reiterated India's historical stand towards the Palestinian

cause and called for an end to Israel's occupation of Arab lands.

Ray will also hold talks with Upper House of Parliament Speaker Ahmad Lawzi, members of the parliament's permanent bureau, and members of the Foreign Affairs Committee on various issues of common interest including parliamentary relations.

Upon arrival, the Indian delegation was received by Speaker Arar, his assistants Abdul Salam Freihat and Dr. Nayef Abu Tayeh, Indian Ambassador to Jordan Gajendra Singh, and members of the Indian embassy staff in Amman.

Ministry sets new rules for subsidised commodities

AMMAN (Petra) — The Ministry of Supply Saturday issued new instructions on the storage of food supplies in private warehouses authorised by the ministry on marketing commodities imported by the ministry.

The ministry said: 1. Subsidised food supplies should only be distributed by the ministry to wholesale merchants as registered with the Federation of Jordanian Chambers of Commerce and authorised to sell goods imported through the ministry.

2. All restaurants, factories and confectionary stores should be

treated as wholesale merchants.

3. Each wholesale merchant dealing with products supplied by the Ministry of Supply should provide the ministry with an inventory of the total amounts of stored food supplies in his warehouse within a period of one month from now.

4. Each wholesale merchant should report to the ministry on a regular basis about incoming and outgoing food supplies in his warehouse supported by bills and other documents.

5. Ministry of Supply officials have the right to visit these warehouses and supervise the process

of stocktaking process.

6. Should the Ministry of Supply decide to raise the price of any subsidised commodity, all warehouses dealing with this commodity should pay the difference in price to the ministry immediately after conducting a stocktaking to determine the quantities found in the store.

7. Should the ministry decide to reduce the price of a certain subsidised commodity, the ministry will pay the difference in price to the concerned merchants.

8. Violators of the law could be fined up to JD 300 and might face prison terms ranging between one week to one month.

Study launched on societies' role

AMMAN (J.T.) — The Ministry of Social Development and the General Union of Voluntary Societies (GUVS) have started work on a field survey to assess the activities of charitable and voluntary societies in Jordan.

A statement carried by the Jordan News Agency, Petra, Saturday said that special teams of social workers had been assigned to the task, which will be conducted in various parts of the country.

The statement said that one of the teams would work in Karak,

Tafleh and Maan regions while a second team would go to Irbid and Mafrqa regions.

The statement said that the 10-15 day visits were intended to help collect information so as to conduct a full study later on the role and the programmes of charitable and voluntary societies and their financial and administrative operations and the prospect of their involvement in small-size income-generating projects in the local communities through cooperation with other institutions.

The statement said that the study would provide ideas on the financial needs of these societies to carry out such schemes.

GUVS, established in 1958, incorporates over 450 voluntary and charitable societies around the Kingdom, employing 45,000 voluntary workers. The union acts as a link between these societies and government bodies, according to GUVS Chairman Dr. Abdullah Al Khatib. GUVS is also in charge of voluntary and charitable societies in the occupied Arab territories.

NATIONAL NEWS IN BRIEF

House panel to review income tax law

AMMAN (Petra) — The Financial Committee of the Lower House of Parliament will meet Sunday to continue discussions of the income tax law and its amendments. The House legal committee will meet to continue discussions of the higher court of justice law. The administrative committee will hold a meeting to discuss complaints.

CSC suggests priority to graduates

AMMAN (J.T.) — The Civil Service Commission (CSC) has referred to the Council of Ministers an amendment to the CSC statute, allowing more chance for university graduates to be employed in government offices and opening the door for those who applied in previous years to be employed this year. CSC Assistant Director Shafiq Khamis said the amendment provided for certain measures that would cope with new developments like giving priority to those who graduated first and average grades and giving certain marks for applicants based on interviews. Khamis said that the CSC had arranged for the appointment of a "good number of graduates" with priority going to the ministries of health and education.

Trucks held up at Nuweibeh over dispute

AMMAN (J.T.) — Nearly 70 refrigerated trucks and lorries have delayed their entry into Egyptian territory after making a ferry boat voyage between Agaba to Nuweibeh. Informed sources told the Jordan Times and Al Ra'i dailies that the trucks carrying food supplies and other material were stopped by their owners in view of an "abrupt" decision by the Egyptian authorities to raise the fees for their entry from 18 Egyptian pounds a month to 25 pounds. The president of the Union of Truckowners in Jordan, Haikal Nezar, has now gone to Nuweibeh to discuss the problem with the Egyptian authorities. He said he hoped the problem would be resolved soon in view of the recent resolutions taken by the Arab Cooperation Council (ACC) leaders in Amman last month providing for transport facilities within the ACC countries.

Morocco marks king's accession to throne

AMMAN (Petra) — Moroccan Ambassador to Jordan Abdul Latif Al Iraqi held a reception Friday at the Marriott Hotel marking the anniversary of King Hussein's accession to throne. The reception was attended by Upper House of Parliament Speaker Ahmad Lawzi, ministers, members of the Upper House and the Lower House of Parliament, members of the Arab and foreign diplomatic corps as well as a number of people.

Accord with Oman endorsed

AMMAN (Petra) — The Cabinet has endorsed the executive programme of a cultural and educational cooperation agreement between Jordan and Oman. The programme includes developing cultural and educational relations between the two countries in all fields. The Cabinet entrusted the Planning Ministry secretary general to sign the agreement on behalf of the Jordanian government.

Students urged to return to Azerbaijan

AMMAN (Petra) — The department of scholarships at the Ministry of Higher Education has urged all Jordanian students pursuing studies at universities and educational institutes of Azerbaijan to leave for the Soviet Union immediately as studies will begin Monday.

Community college exams begin today

AMMAN (Petra) — A total of 6,000 students from all community colleges in the Kingdom will sit for comprehensive practical examinations due to begin Sunday. The examinations, which will last until March 26, will be supervised by 207 committees.

Conference on training to be held in Cairo

AMMAN (Petra) — Jordan will participate in the fourth conference on training and administrative development due to convene in Cairo Monday. The three-day conference will discuss a number of papers dealing with characteristics of Arab administration in various sectors and other related topics.

Bilal Al Sham review begins today

AMMAN (J.T.) — His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan Sunday opens the fifth international conference on the history of Bilal Al Sham at the University of Jordan.

The five-day conference, organised by the University of Jordan and Yarmouk University in cooperation with Damascus University, will deal with 11 topics covering agriculture, water, industry and architecture as well as arts and administrative and commercial affairs during the Abbasid period from 750 A.D. to 1059 A.D.

Scholars and historians participating in the conference began arriving in Amman for the meetings Saturday and were welcomed by University of Jordan officials and members of the conference's organisational committee. The delegates represent various Arab and Islamic countries, the Soviet Union and the United Kingdom as well as universities in the occupied Arab territories.

The organisers said that the five-day conference would be a continuation of earlier conferences held at the University of Jordan and Damascus University to review Arab and Islamic periods in the history of Bilal Al Sham.

During the conference, a major exhibition will be held in Amman displaying antiquities and artefacts and other materials shedding light on the civilisations of the Arab region under Arab and Islamic period.

Prince Hassan is chairman of the organising committee, which groups the presidents of Jordanian universities and other personalities like the chairman of the Jordan Academy of Arabic and the director of the Department of Antiquities.

Seminar on population begins

IRBID (J.T.) — A national seminar on communication, population and development will open at Yarmouk University Sunday under the patronage of His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan.

The three-day seminar, organised by the university in cooperation with the United Nations Fund for Population Activities (UNFPA), and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO), is designed to focus attention on the population situation in the country, the impact of population growth in Jordan and the role of communications in dealing with population problems and laying down principles for possible inclusion of the subject of population education in school syllabuses.

UNFPA last year appointed Dr. Majid Khazraji as a consultant for the National Population Committee in Jordan to help it carry out population projects. The committee, which is headquartered at the Queen Alia Jordan Social Welfare Fund, is trying to set up a national population strategy whose objectives are in conformity with the national development aspirations.

Taking part in Sunday's seminar will be representatives of various ministries and concerned government departments as well as private institutions.

Israeli Arabs

(Continued from page 1)

to block the Middle East peace process.

"We can understand the deep (Arab) concern," Fedotov told reporters. "So let us coordinate our efforts on how to prevent new settlements in the occupied territories."

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By Dr. Fehd Fawek

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Sunday's Economic Pulse

New development plan underway

THE current economic and social development plan for the years 1986-1990 was born dead. The engineers of that plan insisted on closing their eyes and senses to the new winds. They assumed that the future is nothing more than a simple extension of the past. The plan was similar to previous plans, only its size was bigger.

Only now did many people realise that the 1986-1990 plan ignored the new circumstances, and failed to take new trends into account. In summary the plan was based on expansion and heavy borrowing while admitting that the return on new investments (12 per cent) would not be sufficient to service the debt.

To illustrate this fact we have to recall that the plan included fresh external borrowing of around \$3.5 billion over the five years 1986-1990 to finance economic development only. Military expenditure on armaments was not even mentioned in the plan. In other words, the actual expansion in external indebtedness during this period was not a simple mistake which happened under unforeseen circumstances. It was a method of life well researched, planned and determined by the economic and political elite of the country, including those who now raise their voices in criticising indebtedness.

In practice, Jordan did not borrow that much for economic development. Less than half of the planned debt was actually contracted and utilised, yet the country reached the point of crisis.

On the other hand, it was obvious in 1985 and 1986, when the plan was formulated, that oil prices were in decline, the Gulf war had not ended in sight, Arab financial aid to Jordan was dropping; yet, instead of putting the house in order, the plan opted for expansion. The total planned investments in the five years period

were JD 3.175 million or the equivalent of \$10 billion.

This huge plan did not of course get implemented, nor was its implementation possible. The crisis proved that we were building on shifting sands.

No official declaration pronounced the five year plan cancelled. However, for all practical purposes, the plan was dead before it was published in a neat book in two languages. During the period covered by the plan, the government was not worried about economic development. Its main worry was to put off fires that started to erupt here and there in various sectors: moneychangers with deposits and no assets, over-extended banks with bad debts, and large and small scale industries that needed immediate bail out to survive, etc. Even the process of putting off these fires was hardly more than buying more time and allowing problems to fester and finally explode.

It is understood now that the Ministry of Planning is considering a new economic plan for the years 1991-1995, one that will be flexible. Only one year will be firm and obligatory, represented by the budget of that year, while the planning for the period beyond will be indicative and subject to change in accordance to actual progress.

Central planning is good, at least on paper. The difficulties arise only in the implementation and the attempt of putting the real changing life into pre-determined molds and patterns.

In general, Jordan is not without an economic plan now. We have the economic corrective programme, which was agreed upon with the IMF. So far three Jordanian governments adhered to the

programme. It was formally presented to the Lower and Upper Houses of Parliament as a basis for 1990 budget, it received an implied approval from both houses and from the enlightened public opinion.

Therefore, any new plan has to be a reproduction of, and an elaboration on, the current corrective programme. We have no other option as long as the knife of indebtedness is pointed at our necks.

Under these circumstances, the formulation of an official economic plan is not urgent, nor harmful in itself. What we need now is not an investment and financing plan, as was the case 50 years ago, but a plan of policies, targets and timetables. The plan, if any, should be confined to the public sector, as the private sector will take care of itself and should not be planned for except by way of forecasting.

Finally, it should not be forgotten at this juncture, that the countries that used central planning have abandoned the idea and tried to employ the signals of the free market in search for efficiency and better allocation of resources. Only those countries that are economically underdeveloped, and politically undemocratic, still have five-year plans. The economic situation in those countries is deteriorating year after year. The developing countries that were able to achieve the economic miracle, such as Korea, Taiwan, Singapore, Hong Kong, Malaysia and Thailand did so without central planning. They only provided the proper incentives, the right climate and the effective institutions, which released the real economic potential of their peoples.

Arabs are being had

THE EYES of the world were once again focused on Saturday's Israeli inner cabinet meeting to give its final word on the U.S. proposals for Israeli-Palestinian peace talks. This was taking place amid renewed hopes that the pressures being applied on Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir from all sides, including his Labour partners in the government, to accept these proposals would succeed. The last-minute footdragging by Shamir to extract more favourable conditions and assurances from Washington had been met with resistance from all quarters, including his deputy Shimon Peres and Defence Minister Yitzhak Rabin. When all failed, Shamir tried in vain to ensure receipt of extra U.S. aid to settle Soviet Jews without offering assurances that such new immigrants would end up in Arab territories. If anything, all these recent developments mean that when the U.S. decides to put its feet down, it can create miracles, albeit it is premature to label the latest U.S. successes with Israel as such.

True, Shamir and his proteges in the Israeli government tried to scream the house down on U.S. Secretary of State James Baker for demanding assurances from Israel that the extra \$400 million aid would not be used to settle the new immigrants in the occupied territories and demanded a rapid reconsideration of Baker's terms. When this Israeli outcry was effectively rebuffed by Washington, a glimmer of hope was struck that suggests that preliminary peace talks between Israel and the Palestinian side was after all in the offing. Still, the Arab side would prefer that no aid be offered to Israel at this stage to settle new immigrants even if such aid is effectively linked to assurances that none of it would be used to settle them in Arab territories. The Arab position should be an outright rejection of any settlement of Jewish immigrants whether in Israel or outside it in the Arab territories. Surely, Washington knows and comprehends that any settlement of Jewish immigrants in Israel proper with U.S. funds would in the final analysis release Israeli funds that would end up being spent on expanding Israeli settlements in the Arab territories. There is a growing fear, therefore, that as rosy as the picture that is being painted about the latest developments on the prospects of Israeli-Palestinian talks, the Arab side is being nevertheless had. The clearest picture that is emerging from all recent events and developments portray an Arab success or a semblance of success that is only true in form at a time when Israel is still striking one substantive victory after the other in matters that count most. Thus, as the Arab side may wish to celebrate the beginning or near beginning of peace talks between Israel and an unidentified Palestinian delegation, Israel earns another half a billion of urgently needed U.S. funds over and above the \$3 billion that it annually gets in order to populate itself and in due course the occupied territories with millions of new immigrants from the four corners of the world.

JORDAN PRESS EDITORIALS

Al Ra'i daily on Saturday referred to King Hussein's latest tour in the Gulf states where he discussed pan-Arab affairs and the question of Jewish immigration into Palestine. The paper said that although Jordan is most affected by this immigration, and is bound to suffer as a result of Israel's policies in the region, it was the first Arab country to call the nation's attention to the danger and to spearhead joint efforts designed to abort Israel's ambitious plans in the Arab region. The paper said that it is not yet late for a collective Arab action, and it is incumbent on all Arabs, even those in the Gulf region to rally their ranks and unify their stand. Israel's ambitions in the Arab homeland can never be fulfilled without first overcoming Jordan's strong defensive fortress; and for this reason the Kingdom has been facing continued threats from the Zionists, noted the daily. It said that Jordan, which continues to back the uprising of the Palestinian people, is now confronting a real threat to its existence, and can only rely on its own strength and that of the Arab Nation which can back its efforts and its defence.

A columnist in Al Ra'i draws attention to the need for Jordan to increase its food production, and says that the government realises this need and it takes only a political decision to achieve this objective. Fehd Al Fawek cites statistics which notes that Jordan's consumption of cereals in the 1970s has been increasing at the rate of 11.5 per cent while local cereal production between 1972 and 1979 was decreasing at the rate of 15.3 per cent. The writer also notes that Jordan's imports of food products increased from \$1 per (7.3 per cent), Syria (22.9 per cent), Morocco (4 per cent) Egypt (45 per cent) and Tunisia (45.5 per cent). He says that the direct result of increased consumption is the population growth in the country, and also the rise in the standard of income and the access to different types of food supplies. Since there is difficulty in controlling population growth in Jordan, then the only way of dealing with the problem is through serious efforts to increase food production. He says that increased food production is not only for local consumption but could also be used for export to bring in additional income.

Al Dustour daily noted in its editorial Saturday that positive side in the U.S. Secretary of State James Baker's recent statement about peace prospects. The paper noted that Baker has made it clear that Israel bears the responsibility for any failure in achieving peace, and that Washington will not provide further assistance to the Jewish state should the latter fail to provide pledges not to use such assistance for setting up new settlements in the occupied Arab territories. This stand, said the paper, constitutes a new diplomatic move by the United States to bring pressure to bear on Israel, something which of course angered Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir and his aides, at a time when Israel is involved in a huge settlement process to absorb the new immigrants coming from Eastern Europe. The paper said that the American stand is welcomed by the Arabs as good development, but it is feared that Baker, like his predecessor's will go back on his stand, and so destroy the last chance for a settlement.

Middle East may profit from developments in East Europe

By M.C. Jaspersen

WASHINGTON — With new frontiers opening up in Eastern Europe, the United States sees a possible bonanza for Middle Eastern oil producing countries.

"We see this as an opportunity, rather than as a cause for concern," Department of Energy Assistant Secretary for International Affairs and Energy Emergent John Easton told USIA Worldnet satellite television programme participants in Dhahran, Riyadh and Kuwait.

In the February 27 "Dialogue" programme, Easton explained

that "this new life coming to Eastern Europe, the change in the governments, the economic freedoms, the new democratic freedoms that these countries have, together with the declining production in the Soviet Union," should provide new oil markets.

"I tend to think that the Gulf countries in particular will be able to increase their capacity to satisfy the demand in Eastern Europe and see that as an opportunity not only for your part of the world, but also for us in the United States. With healthier economies in Eastern Europe, we'll be able to have increased markets for the

goods and services we produce," Easton said.

In order to cope with just such new challenges, President Bush has charged the Department of Energy with establishing a national energy strategy, a plan for the future that should help the United States make "some very difficult choices" concerning clean, efficient use of energy, Easton said.

"We're making them right now in debating our Clean Air Act. And it's that sort of decision that will have to be made as we refine this policy and deliver it to the president by the end of this year," he added.

Easton said that the strategy would have to take into consideration the many energy factors on the minds of Americans, who still remember the energy shortages of the 1970s and the dangers of nuclear energy following the accident at Three Mile Island in Pennsylvania in 1979.

Furthermore, the unresolved problem of nuclear waste disposal has halted construction of new nuclear power plants.

Finally, there is growing

national concern about acid rain and global warming, raising questions about the use of coal, America's most abundant domestic fuel.

With U.S. domestic oil production at its lowest level in 25 years and oil imports once again reaching record levels, the Bush administration wants to see some serious, long-term energy policy developed now, Easton said.

A Riyadh participant asked whether Easton feared that political flareups in the Middle East might again interrupt the flow of oil.

"We do not expect a recurrence of the activities of the past," Easton said, adding that the United States believes "that the whole geopolitical climate has changed."

"While sometimes difficulties in the Mideast cause people to be concerned — and we can't overlook those, at the same time, we in the United States are trying to build better bilateral relationships with all the countries in the Gulf to have a good, mutually beneficial relationship," Easton said.

A Kuwaiti reporter asked what U.S. opinion was on Kuwait's suggestion that OPEC ought to "correct" output quotas to keep the prices of oil down and stimulate demand.

"We, of course, are keen observers of Kuwait's call for the scrapping of quotas, but at the same time, we see a number of other countries in OPEC that might have a different view," replied Easton. So, he said, "like the rest of the world, we will be watching the meeting... in March to see whether the ministers are able to come up with any conclusion regarding quotas."

Easton remarked that the question of quotas should be moot soon. "As the world demand for oil continues to increase," quotas will be insignificant "because most of the members of OPEC will be producing at their capacity by then."

Easton reaffirmed the general U.S. belief that true market forces — the natural laws of supply and demand — ought to guide petroleum markets, rather than such measures as price-

fixing.

Asked whether the United States sees global warming (resulting from the burning of fossil fuels) as a threat to the environment, and whether global warming might eventually threaten petroleum production, Easton said that while the United States "treats the issue of global climate change as a very significant issue that deserves the world's attention," America will not leap to conclusions. The administration will await the outcome of the work of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC).

"We feel that the work undertaken by the IPCC is very necessary in order to help guide us to worldwide solution about global climate change," the energy specialist said.

"There could be a very significant impact on the world if we take action before we understand what the results of that action (halting fossil fuel burning) would be, and whether such action is required," Easton warned — U.S. Information Agency.

LETTERS

Time for action

To the Editor:

RICHARD Henry's article on tourism (Jordan Times, February 18, 1990) throws a lot of light on the plight of this industry in Jordan.

There is a lot behind the question that Mr. Henry raises. If Jordan wants tourism, then the government has to stand up and be counted. It is time that we go beyond utterances and general statements. The government must issue very clear instructions to all its various organisations and departments to put aside the red tape, roll up their sleeves, and get down to working with the Ministry of Tourism in order to make the visitors' stay as pleasant and enjoyable as possible. Regulations and restrictions that are applied just because they have been there for years must be put to the wayside. Tourism can only flourish in an environment that is not encumbered by officialdom.

I do not necessarily agree with Mr. Henry in his evaluation of the September 1988 agreement signed by the Ministry of Tourism and Royal Jordanian. I have made my views clear on this matter in a letter published in the Jordan Times last year. However, there is no denying that Royal Jordanian is a very major mainstay of Jordanian tourism. It has played, and continues to play, a primary role in promoting Jordan as a destination.

Unfortunately, Royal Jordanian may soon lose this pre-eminent role and this will be very detrimental indeed to our beleaguered industry. If there is any truth to the rumours going around, this frantic wave of investigating people for past "mismanagement" may soon hit Royal Jordanian. Please do not misunderstand me, I am not against it, as long as those who wish to judge are driven by the general good and not indulge in satisfying their grudges. But, with the recent management decisions of curtailing many services that RJ has painstakingly cultivated in the past (such as reducing their North Atlantic and some of their European flights), the airline is, to put it mildly, demoralised. Coming on top of this, the rumoured "investigation" may very well herald the end of the airline as we have known it during the last decade. In his address to the Upper House of Parliament last week, the prime minister suggested that his government was contemplating turning some of its institutions to the private sector. I would urge him to place the airline on top of the list, in order to give it a fighting chance to survive. This will help shield the airline from any fallout resulting from the "investigation."

There are certain basic facts that are intrinsic to the tourism industry. With the prevailing economic climate in the country, it becomes essential to highlight two of these characteristics:

First, foreign exchange earnings: Mr. Henry covered this important aspect very effectively in his article. It is indeed a proven fact that minimum promotional funds spent wisely bring back manifold foreign exchange to the country. In fact, some countries have returns in excess of 50-fold on every dollar spent on promotion.

Second, domestic labour: The tourism industry is very labour-intensive. As a rule of thumb, every 100 tourists create one new job opportunity in the hotels, restaurants, travel agencies or the transportation and other support segments of the industry.

Estimates put the total number of visitors to the country (not taking into consideration the foreign labour force and the transit traffic) at over 500,000 persons in 1989. A modest and very achievable increase of 10 per cent during this year will provide job opportunities for 500 Jordanians!

The belief that many hold that Jordanians do not know how to serve is totally unfounded. I can cite many examples of young Jordanian men and women who do an outstanding job in hotels, restaurants, agencies, etc. More and more are being attracted to this industry every day. What they need is training, motivation, guidance and information. The people of this country are friendly and hospitable by nature. Ask any tourist in the street.

Mr. Henry's suggestion to allocate part of the government tax at present being levied should be an obvious one. Unfortunately, every time the suggestion is brought up, it hits the brick wall of government routine. Apparently, laws require that all monies go to the Treasury and are then allocated to the various departments according to budgetary requirements. One would think that successive governments would have found a way to pass the necessary amendment to allow part of the 10 per cent government tax to be paid directly to the Ministry of Tourism. This inaction can only indicate lack of interest in, or awareness of, tourism.

I think it is ridiculously obvious to anyone wishing to see that tourism can, and must, play a leading role along the path of economic recovery. As I mentioned earlier, we must all, government and private sector, stand up and be counted.

Munir Y. Nassar,
 International Traders,
 P.O. Box 408,
 Amman.

Readers, reporters agog at free press

By Mary Beth Sheridan
 The Associated Press

BUCHAREST, Romania — As birds twitter in the pre-dawn darkness, and weary Dacia cars begin to chug through the capital, people start lining up for one of the hottest commodities in post-revolutionary Romania — the newspaper.

The top papers are sold out in a few hours, and a few little boys begin a brisk business of selling hoarded copies for twice the 1-lei (5 cent) price.

Once scorned as a gray prop-

aganda organ for dictator Nicolae Ceausescu, the Romanian press has become a dynamic source of information and a public forum for a people denied both under 45 years of Communism.

"People are dying to find out the truth," said Octavian Paler, honorary director of Romania Libera, one of the top dailies.

Since the December revolution that toppled Ceausescu and led to an end of censorship, the number of newspapers in Romania has nearly quadrupled, according to the culture ministry.

The top three — Romania

Libera, Tineretul Liber and Adevarul — have roughly tripled their circulation, to a total of nearly 4 million.

"We now line up for newspapers more than for food," said Constantin Arambasa, 50, standing with about 40 people at dawn waiting for a Bucharest news shop to open. "There is a thirst for news. Everyone wants to be informed."

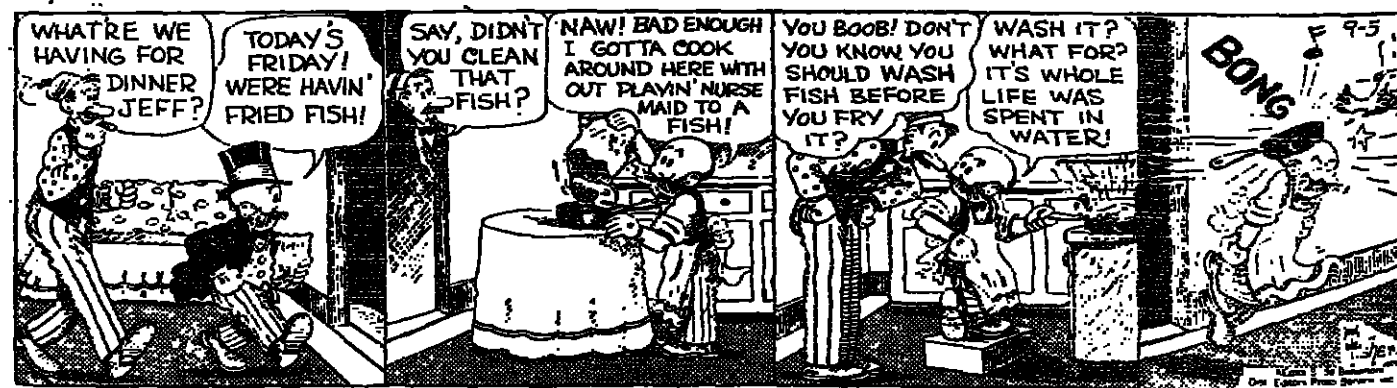
The independent press has served as a guide for an excited and bewildered population to the explosion of freedom following Ceausescu's 24-year rule.

It has taken the leading role in uncovering the excesses of the Ceausescu era, and making the interim government (or the democratic line).

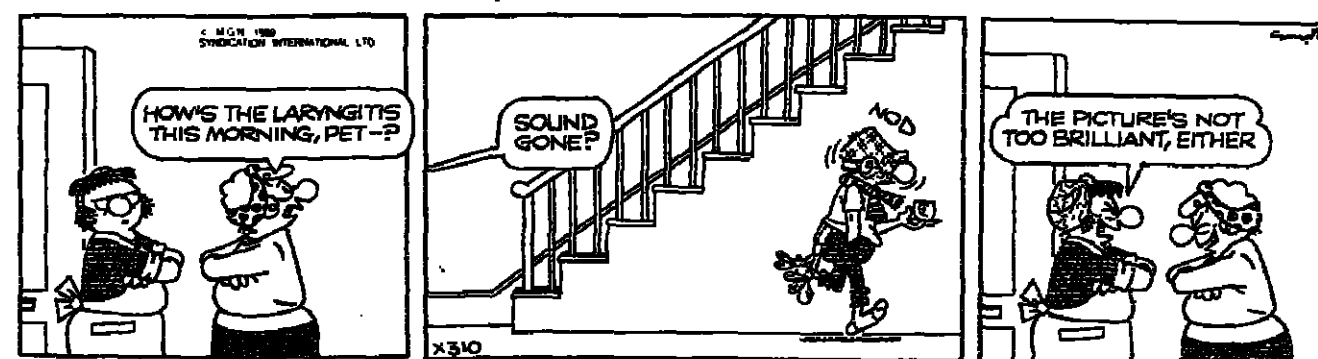
"This is our exercise in democracy," said Arambasa, who waits 1½ hours each morning to buy the paper before going to work. "It's a school."

The change has come despite the fact that many of the reporters are holdovers from when newspapers were slavish promoters of the Ceausescu personality cult, publishing little but retouched photos of the dictator.

Mutt'n' Jeff



Andy Capp



Peanuts



مكة من الأجل

Learning how to do it the Western way

By Philippa Neave

WASHINGTON, D.C. — "People in Poland are very tired after living for 40 years under communist rule. Today, people are living in even worse conditions than they were a year ago, but everyone realises that they have to go through this, that the only way out is to have a free economic and political system," says 27-year-old Mariam Lemke who comes from Krakow in southern Poland.

Along with 10 other young professionals from Poland, Hungary and Czechoslovakia who recently arrived in Washington to participate in a work-training programme, he is likely to be one of Eastern Europe's new generation of leaders who will help implement the fundamental changes now underway. As Eastern Europeans increasingly turn to Western countries for help and advice, this group of 11 is the first to arrive in Washington as part of an internship programme sponsored by the National Forum Foundation (NFF), a privately-funded non-profit research and education organisation.

The programme, brainchild of NFF President Jim Denton, aims at promoting the transition taking place by training young professionals selected from among the activists of the pro-democracy forces in Eastern Europe in the political, business and media fields. A total of 45 young professionals from Poland, Hungary and Czechoslovakia will train in Washington this year, and Denton hopes to extend the programme to include Romanians and Bulgarians. Funding comes from several private groups.

Lemke, a legal adviser to the Solidarity movement on parliamentary and six other "students" have been assigned to the office of a member of the U.S. Congress where for 15 weeks they will learn the fundamentals of parliamentary procedure.

Slawomir Gorecki, 30, also from Poland, worked for 10 years with what was then the outlawed Solidarity trade union led by Lech Walesa. "Poland has a long history of democracy," he notes. "Its 1791 constitution was the first in Europe. Solidarity has always been a democratic movement but it was working under undemocratic conditions. After 40 years of communism we have lost practice but I am pretty sure the transition can be done quickly

and smoothly."

Martin Weiss, a 27-year-old founder and editor of several underground publications in Czechoslovakia, will spend his internship at "New Republic," a Washington-based political magazine. Not as optimistic as Gorecki, he explains that his country also has a fairly strong tradition of democracy, but the pro-democracy, party Civic Forum which gave the country its current president in playwright Vaclav Havel is loosely organised compared to the formidable communist machine that still pervades the country's institutions.

Though hatred for the old regime runs deep and most people associated with it are mistrusted, mass purges are unlikely, if only because they would bring the country to a standstill. Says Weiss: "Some people would like to dismiss all the directors, whoever they are, as a matter of political revenge. Politically, the major problem is that we have to find enough competent people trained for the top posts. They exist but we must create a climate in which they will be encouraged to speak out and be assertive. After decades of living under the system, people are not used to being outspoken."

The situation in Hungary, where the communist party still rules but under a different name, is much the same according to Miklos Martin-Kovacs, 37, who is senior editor for Hungarian Radio and is due to train with a several television stations. "We will have our first parliamentary elections (March 25). There must be a change at the top government level, but we need to keep some of the experts of the old regime because they have the skills... We need a new political structure, but we also need a new economic structure; the government cannot govern and control the economy: let competition work."

The prospect of a weak or unstable government in Hungary because of the fragmentation of opposition parties does not worry Martin-Kovacs. "Look at Italy!" he exclaims. "Governments come and go every few months but the economy works, it's booming. I hope we get the same chance but for it to work the economic framework must be independent from government."

All four young interns who accepted to be interviewed in what was a good-humoured, open



Teaming up to create a new society in Eastern Europe: From left to right, Martin Weiss from Czechoslovakia; Miklos Martin-Kovacs of Hungary; Slawomir Gorecki and Mariam Lemke, both of Poland; and Jim Denton of the U.S. National Forum Foundation.

discussion had one phrase on their lips: free-market economy. NFF President Denton, who has been to Eastern Europe several times over the past year pointed out that "the definition of what a free market differs from person to person. A lot of people are not quite sure what the free market is and what it really means, but obviously it appears as a system that has worked well in the West and over the past 15 years in the Asian countries that have applied it."

Dressed in smart suits and ties, the Eastern Europeans looked nothing like their dowdy elders. They spoke with enthusiasm and clearly saw economic liberalisation as a priority. Said Poland's Gorecki, who having fed himself on a long diet of Beatles music and Hollywood movies speaks American English with ease: "Changing the political situation has to be done with economic reforms. It's the first thing people care about... This government has the massive support of the people and they will make sacrifices. A year ago, you had to line up for hours for a piece of meat. Now you can find it everywhere, but prices are very high. There has never been a government that has been closer to the people, and it has been warning people every day on radio and TV about prob-

lems. "We don't know what to expect from the free market," his compatriot Lemke admits, "but all Poles are very much in favour of it. We have seen the failure of our system." He stressed that several Western consulting firms have already come to Poland to advise on building the legal infrastructure of a free-market economy and to train managers. "We need this if we want to attract foreign investors and I hope that in a few months, we'll have a free market and people won't have any problems doing business in Poland."

Faced with the prospect of mass unemployment after inefficient heavy industries are shut down, Eastern Europe badly needs to retrain workers, Martin-Kovacs says. "The government cannot take care of providing people with jobs, but we are facing a qualification crisis."

The job distribution was "all wrong," Lemke agrees. "People had to wait in line at shops for five hours just because there weren't enough people working there. Mass unemployment will occur, but it will be short-term, during the transition period." Adds Gorecki: "If foreign businesses are willing to risk and invest in Poland, the private sector will grow and create new jobs

for people who have been fired from factories that produce almost nothing. People understand that."

In these countries where the state provided jobs-for-life, Martin-Kovacs points out, work incentives and ethics are seriously eroded. "In Hungary, it was embarrassing to be successful in business; if you were rich, you had to hide your money. If someone worked hard in an administrative position, it didn't look good, it was not accepted by society. A self-made man was not appreciated."

Says Poland's Gorecki: "Making a career was something to be ashamed of because it always meant being involved in some way with the communist party and working hand-in-hand with the people who were so unpopular. We will have to change this way of thinking so that people know that having a career is honourable and that it can be useful to the country. We have to attach our personal success to the success of our country."

Although the experience they will gain from their internship will undoubtedly give them a personal advantage, the four were unanimous in their desire to share the benefit of their new skills with others.

Czechoslovakia's Weiss, who

will study the whole process of magazine publishing, from writing and editing to the technical aspects of layout and printing, explains: "The experience won't mean I will necessarily be promoted, but I hope it will improve the business I am working for. We are just starting and we need it." Weiss is co-founder of "Independent Press Centre," an independent daily news bulletin.

"We are at the beginning of creating a free press and every beginning is hard," Lemke says. "Today we only have one daily, in a few weeks, we will have three or four."

According to Weiss, in Czechoslovakia as in most of Eastern Europe the press is strapped for lack of paper and printing capacity. In addition he says, "the government has not come up with the basic package of laws (protecting the press). The old papers are writing in a freer manner but they are still run by the same people and they are unable to overstep their own shadow. But the biggest obstacle to launching new papers is economic. I am hoping that new laws will make it more profitable to set up a paper. At the moment taxes on publishing are very high."

By contrast, Hungary which introduced a new law on the press a year ago is already further down the road. "The free-market has started to work," Martin-Kovacs says. "Freedom of the press is almost total, but it has allowed a lot of gossip and even pornographic papers to appear... that's the price of freedom."

The four young Eastern Europeans said expectations were high in their countries, but that people are confused and don't know what to expect. "Everyone knows there is no going back," Weiss explains. "The regime has exhausted all its possibilities. But I am not sure many people know what the changes imply."

According to Martin-Kovacs, there is a lot of confusion in Hungary, yet, "people are optimistic because they know there is a real transition, they can feel it. But this optimism must be fueled by economic results and nobody knows who can provide that."

As for Poland, Gorecki says, the mood is also a mix of optimism and confusion. "If you ask people on the street how they feel, the typical answer is: 'We are scared, we fear these changes, but there is no other choice.'" — World News Link.



Views from the bridge between two continents

By John Rettie

ARIF BEY had real trouble finding an Azerbaijani language kindergarten for his children. "There are any number of Russian language schools in the centre of Baku," he said, "but I could find only one Azerbaijani school, and conditions there were far worse."

To even moderate Azeri nationalists like Arif Bey, a lecturer in military history, this is one of the many dismal consequences of long years of Russification. "We've been cut off from our history; as well as from our cultural links with the Middle East," he said. "It was a deliberate policy of Stalin, who hated all peoples of Turkic origin."

One of Stalin's tricks was to keep altering the Azeri script. In 1929 it was changed from Arabic to Latin, and in 1939 from Latin to Cyrillic. Then in 1960 an extra six Latin letters were added, because Cyrillic as used in Russian was inadequate. No wonder schoolchildren were confused. "As a result, people in Azerbaijan nowadays hardly even know the work of our great 12th century poet Nizami," he complained. It might be like forgetting Chaucer.

Then there was a more gruesome, and more typical, Stalinist way of isolating the Azeris in Russia from their brothers in Iran and, to a lesser degree, Turkey. In the 1930s an estimated 72,000 Azerbaijanis were shot, mainly intellectuals. "That's one reason why there are so few Azeris in the centre of the city," said Arif Bey.

Now, of course, since January's pogroms, there are very few Azerbaijanis either, and many Azerbaijanis are saddened by the loss. "We have a lot in common with the Armenians, you know," said Rais Alievkhverdiv, a government minister in the republic. "Our music, our cuisine, are almost the same. Baku without the Armenians has lost colour."

It is hard to tell under grey winter skies, with soldiers patrolling the streets, armoured cars guarding key buildings and the temperature only just above freezing. But sit in a cafe on Nizami square with the Caspian sea just down the road, and sip coffee while — or more likely tea — and imagine the blossom on the trees in the spring sunshine, with the vines creeping up the buildings bursting into life.

You could be in the warm bustle of Veracruz, on the Gulf of Mexico, or in Valparaiso on the Pacific, with its strong British connections. The British were here in Baku, too, in the heyday of empire. Here for the oil, and

to block any Russian attempt to move further south.

Baku has always been a melting pot on the frontiers between east and west. Islam and Christianity, and is home to nearly 80 ethnic groups. For centuries the Caucasus, northern Turkey and Iran have been fought over. The three peoples who suffered most from this were the Armenians, the Kurds and the Azeris, but despite their turbulent history, or perhaps because of it, there is an open-hearted warmth about the Azeris, at least in Azerbaijan.

In Baku, Europe and the Middle East shade imperceptibly into each other, so that you never quite know which continent you are in. Islam is weak, so weak that it is little but a tradition now. A sort of Beirut, perhaps, before the word became synonymous with death and destruction. People go to the mosque only for ceremonies such as weddings and funerals.

According to Ismail Agayev, of the Azerbaijani foreign ministry — all Soviet republics have foreign ministries — Christianity is very far from alien or hostile to the Azeris. It was established in Azerbaijan until the 8th century, and the crusades had little or no echo here. Islam came late to this northern outpost. But there have been some signs of a revival under Mr. Gorbachev's glasnost.

Islamic prayers were, it is true, intoned among the pathways and mounds of red carnations around the graves of the people killed when Soviet troops smashed into Baku on the night of January 19. Crowds still pour up to the cemetery overlooking the city, where a million people gathered three days later to mourn their dead. But there is little sense of Islamic fervour.

If Islam is still barely more than peripheral, however, there is a strong sense of being misunderstood and misrepresented by the rest of the world — which includes Russia — just because they are Muslims. More important than that, perhaps, the Soviet military assault produced what Mr. Agayev called "an awakening of the nation, an emergence of national self-consciousness."

True, he said, the Armenians had suffered a physical genocide at the hands of the Turks, "but we suffered a spiritual genocide" — and although he did not say so, he clearly meant at the hands of the Russians. But since what Mr. Agayev called "the cosmic tragedy for the Azeri people" of January 1920, Russification is over for good. There should be Azerbaijani kindergartens in plenty for Mr. Bey's grandchildren — The Guardian.

Banking the Unbankable — giving credit to the poor

By Donatus de Silva

SOME months ago, in Kinshasa, Zaire, a woman, impersonating the Zairean president's wife, rang up the manager of a local bank and requested a loan for the local currency equivalent of \$4,000 to be immediately delivered to an unlisted post box number. The bank manager, perhaps sensing promotion, quickly delivered the money.

The next day, the manager told his head office what he had done and asked for reimbursement. After some discreet checking with the Palace, the head office informed him that there had been no such request. The hapless bank manager was severely reprimanded. A couple of weeks later, the woman was caught after a spending spree at a local market.

Not everybody in the Third World can gain ready access to credit like that. In fact, most — almost a billion — now live in abject poverty and would fail to get past the security guard at a bank entrance.

Throughout the Third World, the gap between rich and poor has widened. In Africa, this is currently true for far too many countries. In debt-ridden Latin America, there is more misery now than a decade ago. Although several countries in Asia have certainly made remarkable economic progress, mass poverty abounds in various large regions.

With no hope for their future, resentment is growing among the poor. During the last five years in Zambia, Egypt, Sudan, Venezuela, and Jordan, austerity measures imposed by the International Monetary Fund and implemented by national governments have resulted in sudden step price rises in essential food items causing unrest, violence and death. If Third World leaders do not shed outdated development concepts, they may be in for a rougher time in the Nineties.

The future for the Third World's poor is gloomy. But there are breaks in the storm clouds. These have been brought about by citizens' groups based in communities. Out of the bankruptcy and poverty of failed international and national development strategies, tenacious groups are emerging. Change and development are by passing venal bureaucracies and taking place at the local level.

Institute, presents case studies of how small-scale credit schemes, initiated by community groups, are changing the lives of the neediest and introducing them into a cash economy.

The reports recount the lives and environments of poor families and groups in Asia, Africa and Latin America: former tenant farmers in Chile's semi-arid coastal belt; slum dwellers in Cali, Colombia; a disadvantaged community in Bangladesh; mountain villagers in northern Pakistan; and villagers in Sri Lanka, Indonesia, Kenya, Senegal, Tanzania and Zambia.

The accounts are not a treatise on credit for the poor but lively, independent evaluations of relatively unknown community credit projects, by journalists who are nationals of the countries where the schemes are based. The schemes were also selected by the writers.

The views are those of people involved in the projects: their achievements, frustrations and failures. Their experiences have interesting lessons for the development community.

From the 1950s, governments set up several types of credit institutions to channel funds to small farmers and the landless. They included: development banks; commercial and rural banks; and cooperatives. But as the reports in the book show, these efforts hardly touched the poor. According to the Senegal report, for example, the elite working in the National Office of Cooperation and Development Aid milked the institution as an inexhaustible source of jobs for relatives and dependents.

Commercial banks have also failed to bring change to the rural areas. Most people interviewed regarded banks as remote institutions. Banks were not interested

in small loans. To save a rice crop, a person who needed around \$25 had no choice but to go to the local moneylender, who charged exorbitant rates — 240 per cent per year in rural Sri Lanka.

Most of the schemes described deal with credit schemes for women. In these, women have had to overcome enormous traditional and social barriers to better themselves. The reports reveal how some men simply refused to allow their wives to obtain loans because they considered financial matters to be a male prerogative.

Many bankers and economists in the Third World feel that the poor are unable to save and do not have the capacity to manage their finances adequately. The contrary is true: the reports show a high propensity to save among the poor if motivated to do so.

Most borrowers interviewed in the book also had little difficulty

in repaying their loans. Repayment rates are flexible so that borrowers can repay money in small amounts.

Involving people at the earliest stages and group effort have been keys to success. In Pakistan, the women of the mountain villages could not save enough individually to qualify for loans large enough to run a profitable enterprise. But when they pooled their efforts — even though each started with one US cent per month — they were able to save a sizeable amount which made them eligible for a larger loan to set up a poultry farming project.

Banking the Unbankable confirms that people oriented non-governmental organisations are important channels to the urban and rural poor. NGOs perform a number of tasks crucial to the poor, which government authorities or banks cannot do. For instance, NGO workers travel to

remote regions, live with the villagers and interact closely with them.

The common misconception among governments and donor organisations that NGOs are only capable of dealing with small-scale efforts is clearly false. The reports provide evidence to the contrary: the Cooke Credit Fund in India reaches 160 villages; the Social Progress Cooperative in Colombia has a membership of 1,200 and a portfolio of over \$400,000.

Banking the unbankable dispels two other myths: that the poor are passive and unable to organise and handle money wisely; and that there are no mechanisms for channelling money to enterprising individuals or small groups. The schemes described resoundingly affirm the contrary.

The poor are willing. It is for the financial powers-that-be to show the will — Panos, features.

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OPEC oil output stays high

LONDON (R) — OPEC failed to cut output in February despite weaker prices and more quota-busting by some members threatens acrimony in the group, industry sources said Friday.

A Reuters survey of February wellhead output by members of the Organisation of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) reached an estimate of 23.1 million barrels per day (b/d). That compared with a revised 23.03 million for January.

While down from an eight-year peak of 24 million touched in December, market analysts say more cuts may be needed by the 13 exporters to stop a temporary erosion of crude prices.

The monthly Reuters survey uses information from officials, industry and shipping sources.

There were some changes to individual output levels and continued quota violations which industry executives said will create tension when oil ministers meet in Vienna on March 16 at a session of OPEC's market monitoring committee.

Saudi Arabia, the biggest exporter, shaved output to 5.55 million b/d, including a Neutral Zone shared with Kuwait.

Since it is apparently putting some oil into Caribbean tanker storage — not counted in its quota — it is probably now close to its mandatory quota of 5.34 million b/d.

But Kuwait, steady at 1.9 million, and the United Arab Emirates at 2.05 million remained way above assigned levels.

Nigeria also took advantage of strong Atlantic basin demand for its "sweet" low-sulphur and gas-line-rich crudes to put a little extra on the market, going about 150,000 b/d above quota.

By contrast, Iran was struggling to sell its less-prized heavy, "sour" grades and was possibly as much as 400,000 b/d below quota — as much as Kuwait is above.

Industry sources report problems in making an early assessment of Iranian output which means that a Reuters estimate for it at 2.7 million b/d must be regarded as provisional.

"It is going up and down like a yo-yo," a Western industry informant said. "They are probably shooting for 2.8 (million b/d) but it would be surprising if they got there in the end."

Various Reuters sources estimated that Iraq, another exporter of "sour" crudes, was also slightly below quota.

Both Iraq and Iran may argue that they would be doing better and might at least expect slightly higher prices if Kuwait, which is also a "sour" producer was not selling so much.

But Kuwaiti Oil Minister Ali Al Khalifa Al Sabah has said he is not bound to curb output so long as average prices exceeded a declared OPEC target of \$18 per barrel.

Kuwait's implied readiness to keep the rules if prices weaken may soon be tested since the average has now declined to near the \$18 mark, a drop of some \$2 from January when icy North

American winter weather drove up fuel demand.

Many analysts think there will be a further fall between now and the peak of holiday petrol consumption in the northern hemisphere summer unless OPEC makes further output cuts.

"OPEC production is exceeding, we believe, underlying demand by more than one million barrels per day," says Michael Rothman, a vice-president with Merrill Lynch.

"Our sense is that a further price drop is likely, being mitigated, perhaps, by the international oil industry's greater willingness to hold higher levels of inventory," Rothman adds.

Meanwhile, Saudi Arabia appeared to be siding with Iraq against Kuwait in seeking higher oil prices as OPEC's "big three" began crucial talks in Kuwait Saturday, officials and oil analysts said.

Oil ministers of the three major Gulf Arab producers declined to talk to reporters as they went into private discussions on what OPEC should do on prices and output at a meeting of its 13 member states in Vienna on March 16.

Close coordination between the three last November brought about what was described then as the most credible pact in years by OPEC which has been split in the past over political and economic differences.

Kuwait acknowledged last month it was overproducing to prevent prices from rising above

the reference price of \$18 a barrel.

"The Saudis would like to see a modest increase in prices but not to a degree that would destabilise the market," an informed Gulf oil official told Reuters Saturday.

The official, who declined to be named but is close to Saudi thinking, said the kingdom "would like to see prices reflecting the market realities."

The meeting came after a flurry of contacts triggered by a proposal by Iraqi President Saddam Hussein last month that OPEC should consider a target price higher than the present \$18 a barrel.

"I think the Iraqis are asking to raise prices to \$20 a barrel," a Kuwait-based oil analyst told Reuters.

Analysts said an increase in oil prices would appeal to Saudi Arabia, which is struggling to offset a budget deficit of \$6.7 billion for 1990.

"The Saudis don't have any reason to resist \$20 dollars," the Middle East manager of a major Japanese company told Reuters by telephone.

In his letters to King Fahd of Saudi Arabia and Kuwait's Emir Jaber Al Ahmad Al Sabah, Hussein also voiced concern about overproduction by some producers, which oil analysts said was apparently directed against Kuwait.

Japan current account plunges in January

TOKYO (R) — Japan's current account dropped into deficit in January for the first time in six years, but economists in Tokyo said the shortfall was unlikely to continue.

The current account, the broadest measure of trade in goods and services, was \$636 million in deficit after a \$2.51 billion surplus a year earlier, the finance ministry reported Friday.

Japan's previous deficit, of \$562 million, was recorded in January, 1984.

"The drop was largely due to seasonal factors," said Nobuyuki Saji, senior economist at Nikko Securities Research Centre. "It's nothing to get excited about."

The overall current surplus had narrowed steadily in calendar 1989, to \$56.9 billion from \$79.63 billion a year earlier.

Analysts said factors involved in the decrease, such as the initial depressing effects of a weaker yen on trade, higher oil prices and slowing auto exports, will continue at least for the first quarter of 1990.

"But the deficit will not continue," said Yoshihiro Furukane, an economist at the Yamazaki Securities Research Institute. "Seasonally adjusted, it's still in surplus."

The seasonally adjusted figure for January was in surplus by some \$3 billion, economists

noted.

Japan's new year holidays in January and the lag in trade and outflow of funds due to travel overseas in the month usually contribute to a seasonal drop in the current-account balance, they added.

The holidays weaken exports, depressing the trade balance, while overseas travel makes a big dent in the balance of trade in invisibles, which include services.

"There was also a drop in net long-term capital outflows in January, due to a sell-off of foreign bonds by Japanese investors," said Saji.

Long-term capital flows were in deficit by \$2.87 billion after a surplus of \$3.39 billion in December, 1989.

"But foreigners were also selling off Japanese stocks in anticipation of political uncertainty due to the (Feb. 18 Japanese general) elections, so these counteracted each other somewhat," said Susumu Kato, a senior economist at Goldman Sachs International in Tokyo.

Exports fell to \$18.16 billion from \$23.99 billion in December, but were little down from \$19.03 billion a year earlier.

"Exports will continue to decline as a result of overseas transplants by Japanese companies," said Kato.

Western business reports payments delays by USSR

MOSCOW (R) — Several state-owned Soviet trading companies have fallen behind on payments to Western suppliers and appear to be having difficulty gaining access to foreign exchange, Western bankers and diplomats said Friday.

The delays have raised widespread concern in Moscow's foreign business community but appear to be caused primarily by organisational problems following a recent overhaul of the companies rather than a crisis of creditworthiness.

"There are delays. These companies appear to be having cash flow problems and the government is refusing to bail them out," said one Western diplomat, who asked not to be identified.

Diplomats and bankers say at least six foreign trade organisations, the main conduit for the Soviet Union's import and export business, have fallen behind on payments, with some overdue obligations dating back to November.

Foreign Trade Bank officials did not respond to a request to discuss foreign debt but one of the Soviet Union's most respected academic economists, Abel Aganbegyan, did confirm the delays in an interview with Reuters.

"It is very bad. What else can we say... I know the bills are not being paid but I think it is a question of temporary difficulties," said Aganbegyan, rector of the government's Academy of the National Economy.

"It is just that we are very bad managers. The Soviet Union is a very rich country," he added. The payments delays started to attract attention among Western suppliers several weeks ago and are now far longer than the odd hiccup of a few days that had been experienced in the past, bankers and diplomats said.

The problems have been aggravated by a deepening economic

crisis which liberal economists such as Aganbegyan lay at the door of delays in implementing reforms to introduce the free market and dismantle controls of the command economy.

A key point of dispute is how — and whether — to introduce a parallel rouble which would be convertible into hard currency. Western businessmen say the fear of not being able to swap roubles into currencies such as the dollar has put a dampener on many plans to enter into joint ventures.

The Soviet Union's foreign debt is relatively low given its huge wealth in natural resources and was estimated by the government newspaper Izvestia Friday at about 40 billion roubles — \$64 billion at official rates.

Several billion dollars of credit lines arranged by banks in major Western industrial nations for the Soviet Union in late 1988 have still not been fully taken up, illustrating an innate conservatism in its foreign borrowing policy.

But as a lender the Soviet Union has also been experiencing the same problems as Western industrial nations, having to reschedule large portions of debt to the developing world.

The foreign trade organisations have been given new freedom to run their affairs as part of President Mikhail Gorbachev's drive to break with the legacy of Stalinist central planning.

That has led some Western bankers to suspect they are suffering from organisational problems and inexperience.

In addition, Western bankers believe some foreign trade organisations are now having to come up with their own hard currency rather than relying on allocations from a central authority. Some, they say, may have been simply overruling.

Soviet economists admit the opposing camps of pro- and anti-

reformers have created a "half-way house" which has led to a confusion of responsibilities.

The government's economic stabilisation plan, unveiled by Prime Minister Nikolai Ryzhkov in December, was seen as a compromise. He said then the government was worried about its growing debt burden and wanted to cut imports.

But a top government planner, Andrei Orlov, deputy chairman of the State Commission for Economic Reform, told Reuters a new package to speed economic reform within the framework of the Ryzhkov plan would be unveiled in the next 10 days.

Meanwhile, the Soviet Union has rescheduled the equivalent of billions of dollars of debt owed by Poland and Cuba over the past three years and written off money lent to Vietnam and several other countries, official figures show.

The figures, in the government newspaper Izvestia, put the Soviet Union's outstanding lending to socialist and Third World countries at \$5.8 billion roubles (\$143 billion).

"There is no serious hope of receiving this debt very soon," said Izvestia in a commentary. "It is very likely that the figures under the heading of 'written off' will grow."

The Soviet Union rescheduled 3.2 billion roubles (\$5.33 billion) of Poland's debt between 1986 and 1989 — almost two thirds of the total 4.96 billion roubles (\$8.27 billion) owed by Warsaw.

The second biggest figure, 2.4 billion roubles (\$4 billion), owed by Cuba, the Soviet Union's largest creditor, was rescheduled in the same period.

As of Nov. 1, 1989, the date for which all the figures were compiled, Cuba owed the Soviet Union 15.5 billion roubles (\$25.8 billion), just over 50 per cent more than second-placed Mongolia and Vietnam.

E. Germany advances privatisation

EAST BERLIN (AP) — East German authorities have taken the first step toward privatising state industries but set conditions that prevent a wholesale sell-off of major assets.

Huge factories now run by the central government are to be offered to East German investors on March 15. However, sales of land and fixed assets to foreign buyers will be prohibited, apparently to prevent a buyout by powerful West German manufacturers.

The conversion to a more Westernised style of industrial management is set to begin only three days before free elections. The new parliament after the March 18 vote could choose to revise the plans by the interim government of communist premier Hans Modrow.

Wolfgang Krause, the economic reform commissioner, told reporters that the assets to remain in public ownership would be under the control of parliament. Lawmakers could make exceptions to the sales restrictions if individual transactions are deemed to be to the public's benefit, he said.

Krause said other details of the conversion remained to be settled by the new government to be chosen after the vote.

Government spokesman Wolfgang Meyer said the interim step toward privatisation would give industry managers more autonomy while hindering "arbitrary sale of assets and property."

East Germany's economy has ground to a halt in recent weeks as the nation awaits the outcome

of its first democratic balloting. The lack of detail offered on the privatisation plan likely reflects the interim leaders' hesitance to make major changes in direction without a public mandate.

The current parliament has reported that 35 political parties have registered to run candidates in the elections.

Parliamentary secretariat chief Herbert Kelle told the Communist Party newspaper Neues Deutschland that 35 parties had registered for the elections, but that no candidate lists were available yet.

Hans-Andreas Schoenfeldt, spokesman for the election commission, told reporters that a final list of parties and candidates would not be released until March 9.

AMMAN EXCHANGE RATES

Saturday, March 3, 1990 Central Bank official rates			
Buy	Sell	French franc	115.7 116.4
U.S. dollar	671.0 675.0	Japanese yen (for 100)	446.6 449.3
Pound Sterling	1105.2 1111.8	Dutch guilder	346.6 348.7
Deutschemark	390.4 392.7	Swedish crown	109.2 110.0
Swiss franc	443.6 446.3	Italian Lira (for 100)	53.0 53.5
		Belgian franc (for 100)	188.1 189.2

Weekly Amman Financial Market trading

AMMAN (J.T.) — The following table summarises trading activities at the Amman Financial Market starting Saturday Feb. 24, '90 and ending Wednesday Feb. 28, '90. (Figures in Jordanian dinars).

Name of company	Number of shares	Volume of trade	Opening price	Closing price	Par value
Banking and financial institutions					
Industrial Development Bank	—	—	—	—	1,000
Jordan Islamic Bank	4902	16670	3,410	3,370	1,000
Jordan Kuwait Bank	8952	14099	1,590	1,550	1,000
Housing Bank	925	2171	2,330	2,350	1,000
Arab Jordan Investment Bank	14650	50305	3,380	3,380	1,000
Cairo Amman Bank	—	—	—	—	5,000
Bank of Jordan	309	4531	14,600	14,700	5,000
Arab Bank	1630	416728	254,000	253,750	10,000
Jordan National Bank	10100	26127	2,600	2,590	1,000
Arab Banking Corporation Bank (Jordan)	10152	22331	1,750	2,240	1,000
Jordan Investment and Finance Bank	3037	10619	3,390	3,590	1,000
National Portfolio Securities	93398	220930	2,300	2,380	1,000
Arab Finance Corporation (Jordan)	4738	11525	2,430	2,430	1,000
Real Estate Financing Corporation	—	—	—	—	2,000
Beit Al Mal Saving & Investment for Housing	—	—	—	—	1,000

Insurance and reinsurance

Middle East Insurance	—	—	—	—	1,000
Jordan French Insurance	29050	51530	1,740	1,760	1,000
Jordan Insurance	1228	3065	2,500	2,500	1,000
Arab Life and Accident Insurance	2675	3958	1,450	1,470	1,000
Yarmouk Insurance and Reinsurance	17070	27657	1,750	1,600	1,000
Holy Land Insurance	3875	10016	2,600	2,600	1,000
Philadelphus Insurance	1000	1643	1,800	1,600	1,000
Arab Union International Insurance	120	156	1,350	1,280	1,000
Jordan Insurance	562	923	1,750	1,630	1,000
Jordan Gulf Insurance	750	1275	1,750	1,700	1,000
General Arabia Insurance	—	—	—	—	1,000
National Ahliya Insurance	—	—	—	—	1,000
Arab Belgian Insurance and Reinsurance	—	—	—	—	1,000
United Insurance	—	—	—	—	1,000
Arab Eagle Insurance	—	—	—	—	1,000
Universal Insurance	2050	2321	1,080	1,130	1,000

Services and industries

General Investments	—	—	—	—	1,000
Imna for Investment and Financial Facilities	—	—	—	—	1,000
Darco for Housing and Investment	4231	4273	1,010	1,010	1,000
Real Estate Investment (Aqarco)	65221	58845	0,890	0,890	1,000
Jordan Gulf Real Estate Investment	250450	170448	0,660	0,660	1,000
Petra Enterprises and Leasing Equipments	282364	225005	0,830	0,770	1,000
Equipment Leasing & Maintenance/Ta'jeero	290640	186703	1,170	1,110	1,000
International Contracting & Investment	—	—	—	—	1,000
Jordanian Electric Power	6110	8434	1,400	1,370	1,000
Irbid District Electricity	100	80	0,800	0,800	1,000
Arab International Hotels	60095	96210	1,600	1,590	1,000
Hotels and Tourism	—	—	—	—	1,000
United Middle East and Comodoro Hotels	95600	73503	0,800	0,760	1,000
Garage Owners Federation Office	—	—	—	—	1,000
Jordan National Shipping Lines	43434	112327	2,570	2,580	1,000
Jordan Press Foundation	—	—	—	—	1,000
Jordan Press and Publishing	—	—	—	—	1,000
Dar Al Shaab Press, Printing and Publishing	—	—	—	—	1,000
Jordan Dairy	21086	35564	1,680	1,660	1,000
Arab Pharmaceutical Manufacturing	45136	213696	4,960	4,780	1,000
Jordan Medical Corporation	400	416	1,100	1,040	1,000
Jordan Pharmaceutical Industries	170280	574280	3,170	3,200	1,000
Jordan Phosphate Mines	7085	32591	4,600	4,600	1,000
Industrial, Commercial and Agricultural (Inta)	18927	44874	2,360	2,350	1,000
Arab Chemical Detergent Industries	3969	34101	6,650	6,560	1,000
Jordan Kuwait for Agricultural Products	69500	122006	2,030	2,030	1,000
Jordan Sweets and Chocolate Manufacturing	—	—	—	—	1,000
Aladdin Industries	11700	37392	3,160	3,200	1,000
Arab Aluminium Manufacturing	63049	193125	2,980	3,060	1,000
Jordan Worsteds Mills	—	—	—	—	1,000
Jordan Ceramics	1400	4055	2,850	2,850	1,000
Chemical Industries	8690	26342	3,110	3,190	1,000
Jordan Industries and Match (JIMCO)	48100	89345	1,830	1,880	1,000
Dar Al Dawa' for Development and Investment	4310	18631	4,250	4,350	1,000
National Steel Industries	15950	42277	2,640	2,660	1,000
Universal Chemical Industries	151150	89629	5,720	5,800	5,000
General Mining	4040	6908	1,800	1,710	1,000
Jordan Petroleum Refinery	1966	15954	8,120	8,120	1,000
Jordan Lime & Brick	—	—	—	—	1,000
National Industries	98181	138258	1,320	1,370	1,000
Arab Paper Converting and Trading	2231	1722	0,740	0,750	1,000
Arab Investment and International Trade	150448	136463	0,910	0,900	1,000
Jordan Wooden Industries (JWICO)	48100	4128	3,500	3,440	1,000
Livestock and Poultry	74160	92838	1,310	1,280	1,000
Jordan Pipes Manufacturing	2000	6540	3,270	3,270	1,000
Rafia Industrial for Plastic Bags	—	—	—	—	1,000
Jordan Paper and Cardboard	106	1007	10,000	9,500	1,000
Jordan Rockwool Industries	161185	570818	3,340	3,610	1,000
Trans-Jordan Minerals Research	—	—	—	—	1,000
Jordan Himeh Mineral	—	—	—	—	1,000
Orient Dry Batteries Factory	—	—	—	—	1,000
Woolen Industries	860	1413	1,620	1,620	1,000
Jordan Tanning	704	1760	2,500	2,500	5,000
Jordan Printing and Packaging	—	—	—	—	1,000
Jordan Tobacco and Cigarette	—	—	—	—	1,000
Mas Industries	—	—	—	—	1,0

UAE, Iraq draw

KUWAIT (R) — Iraq, playing with 10 men in the second half, held World Cup finalists United Arab Emirates (UAE) to a 2-2 draw Saturday in a Gulf Cup soccer match in Kuwait.

It was the third draw in three games for UAE, who saw victory snatched from their grasp two minutes from the end when Saad Qais scored the equaliser from the penalty spot.

UAE, who have also drawn with Oman and Qatar, started energetically and busy midfielder Nasser Khamis rattled the cross bar in the third minute.

Two minutes later he opened the scoring with a header into the back of the Iraqi net and the UAE appeared on their way to giving a display worthy of their slot in Italy.

But Iraq shrugged off the shock of the early goal and got one back in the 24th minute when Ahmad Radhi pounced on a loose ball just outside the area and swivelled round to drill the ball into the corner of the net.

UAE went ahead again in the final minute of the first half when defender Adnan Darjal, a Mexico World Cup veteran, brought down Ali Thani in the box and the referee ordered a penalty.

Ali Thani made no mistake with the shot and to compound Iraq's problems the referee showed Darjal the red card for dissent.

Despite the handicap, Iraq dominated the second half and created more chances than their rivals. Natiq Hashim was unlucky not to grab the equaliser in the 78th minute when his shot hit the woodwork.

But two minutes from the final whistle UAE defender Khalil Ghanem brought down Ahmad Radhi in the box, and Qais sent goalkeeper Mohsin Mussabah one way while the ball went the other.

The result put Iraq at the head of the table in the six-nation tournament along with Kuwait. Both have four points from three matches.

King congratulated on air race achievement

AMMAN (J.T.) — His Majesty King Hussein Saturday received a cable from French Ambassador to Jordan Dennis Bouchard conveying the congratulations of the French government for the victory of Sagr Al Urdun (Falcon of Jordan) in the Malaysia International air race 1990.

Bouchard said that this victory is something the Jordanian people should be proud of.

The three-member crew of Sagr Al Urdun, held a press conference in Amman Saturday about their trip from Paris to the Far East and back to the French capital.

Captain Eric Ledger, his assistant Rakan Nasser and photo-

grapher Mazen Fanous described the race as "a very strong competition." "We competed with 14 aircrafts from the United Arab Emirates, France, Britain, Belgium and Malaysia, along a 24,000 kilometre route, considered the longest trip ever contested in an international race," the crew members said.

They paid tribute to His Majesty King Hussein for encouraging them to take part in the competition which, they said, has helped to boost Jordan's image as a tourist place. The crews of the participating aircrafts were taken on a tour of archaeological sites during their stay in Jordan before the last leg of the trip between Amman and Paris.

Algeria trounces Nigeria

ALGIERS (R) — Rabah Madjer and Djamel Menad scored two goals apiece to lead Algeria to an emphatic 5-1 victory over Nigeria in the opening match of the 17th African Nations Cup soccer tournament Friday.

Algeria, hampered by heavy winds, went ahead in the 35th minute when an excellent pass

from Cherif Oudjani set up Madjer, but they were unable to score again before the interval.

Madjer netted his second goal in the 59th minute, unleashing an Algerian goal spree. Menad scored in the 69th and 72nd minutes in quick counter-attacks with Madjer.

Brazilian team chief wants Havelange proposal tried

SAO PAULO (R) — Brazilian national soccer coach Sebastiao Lazaroni said a proposal to divide matches into 25-minute quarters should be tried to see if the idea would work in practice.

Lazaroni was quoted in Brazilian newspapers Friday as saying he favoured the proposal, championed by International Football Federation (FIFA) President Joao Havelange, which would depart from the traditional format of two 45-minute halves.

Lazaroni said the idea, aimed at allowing more television commercials and aired by fellow Brazilian Havelange in last Sunday's O Globo newspaper, could bring "a new dynamic" into the sport.

Lazaroni suggested that the idea be tried out on junior teams. "It is necessary to test the theory in practice to evaluate the reactions of those involved in a soccer match from players to fans," he said.

Havelange told O Globo the notion of 25-minute quarters had been around for nearly 20 years. He said he had originally resisted it, feeling the time was not ripe. "But with the evolution of time, experience and needs, I think it would be worthwhile studying, examining and authorising a test," he said.

O Globo quoted him as saying he believed the changes would already be in place for the 1994 World Cup in the United States.

Agassi scores comeback victory

SCOTTSDALE, Arizona (R) — American Andre Agassi had a shaky start but still came through a winner in a round robin competition at the \$300,000 Scottsdale Open Friday.

Agassi, the highest ranked player in the eight-man exhibition, beat fellow American Tim Mayotte 2-6, 6-3, 6-2 after struggling to overcome a series of backhand errors.

Earlier, Emilio Sanchez of Spain consolidated his position as leader in the points standings with a 6-3, 2-6, 6-1 win over American Pete Sampras. Sanchez is the only player not to have lost a match. In a later match, Jay Berger defeated fellow American Aaron Krickstein 6-4, 1-6, 6-2.

Agassi, ranked six, fell behind quickly in the first set against the eighth ranked Mayotte, as the big-serving American attacked Agassi's error-prone backhand to win the set 6-2.

But at 2-2 in the second set, Agassi suddenly went into high gear as Mayotte's serve failed him at crucial moments.

Mayotte double-faulted to fall behind 4-2 and Agassi embarked on a streak which saw him win eight of nine straight games, taking the second set 6-3 and forging a 4-0 lead in the third.

Agassi pounced on Mayotte's serve, blasting returns and passing shots before Mayotte fought back briefly to 5-2. But Agassi took the match 6-2 on his favourite shot, a forehand winner.

"The further the match went on, the more comfortable I felt," Agassi said. "I started playing much more aggressively. When I got a short ball, I wasn't scared to do something with it."

Mayotte admitted his errors cost him dearly. "I was looking for a way to hurt him but I was just making too many errors," Mayotte said.

English soccer:

Gillespie puts Liverpool ahead

LONDON (R) — Defender Gary Gillespie returned from injury and made amends for mistakes by his Liverpool team mates to put the club back at the top of the English first division with a late goal against Millwall Saturday.

But Liverpool were prepared for a short reign. Championship rivals Aston Villa, just one point behind, were playing at Coventry in a Sunday match and hoped to snatch back the lead.

Liverpool began Saturday with confident expectations of easily beating struggling Millwall and extending their unbeaten run to 17 matches.

But things did not go all their own way against the heavily defensive London side.

England striker Peter Beardsley shot wide from a penalty only two minutes into the match, John Barnes hit the bar, and both Welsh international Ian Rush and Scott Steve Nicol had goals disallowed.

It was left to Gillespie to get

the result Liverpool needed with just seven minutes to play.

The Scot, playing his first match for three months after a hamstring injury, scored with a header from a Beardsley corner.

Champions Arsenal saw their hopes of retaining the title wither when they suffered their ninth away defeat of the season, 2-0 to London rivals Queen's Park Rangers.

Former England midfielder Ray Wilkins put Rangers ahead against the run of play in the 56th minute.

The mood turned ugly when Arsenal, knocked out of the English F.A. Cup by Rangers in the fourth round, appealed in vain for a penalty, saying central defender Alan McDonald had handled the ball.

Two of the visiting players were booked after arguments with referee Roger Milford who was given a police escort off the pitch at the end of the match.

Rangers, beaten only once in

15 games, scored again in the 75th minute when Roy Wegerie drove home the ball from an awkward angle.

Arsenal, who had two more players booked before the match was over, are now 10 points behind Liverpool, and have dropped a place to fourth, level on points with third-placed Nottingham Forest who have a better goal difference.

But the champions still have home matches to come with both the leaders and Aston Villa.

Nottingham Forest beat relegation-threatened Manchester City 1-0, but City players protested that Forest midfielder Gary Crosby had knocked the ball out of goalkeeper Andy Dibble's hands before shooting into the empty net.

Veteran midfielder Peter Reid had to steer City manager Howard Kendall away from a confrontation with the referee as the visiting side tried to get the goal overturned.

Navratilova has easy win to advance in tournament

INDIAN WELLS, California (AP) — With a dominating serve and ranging all over the court, Martina Navratilova raced past Nathalie Herremann Friday to move into the semifinals of the Virginia Slims of Indian Wells.

Navratilova needed only 47 minutes to crush her French opponent, a qualifier, 6-2, 6-1, and lost just seven points on her serve the entire match. One of the points she lost came when, ranging far behind the baseline, she accidentally hit a linesman with her racket while trying to chase down a shot.

"I was very upset," she said. "I thought I had hit the fence, then I realised I had hit him. He had a big bump on his head."

The top-seeded Navratilova is unbeaten this year, having won tournaments in Chicago and Washington, D.C.

In the semifinals, she will face

Katerina Maleeva of Bulgaria, who defeated Meredith McGrath 6-1, 6-2 in their quarterfinal match. The other semifinal pits third-seeded Helena Sukova of Czechoslovakia, a 6-4, 6-3 winner over Isabelle Demongest of France, against 11th-seeded Amy Frazier, who beat number eight Rosalyn Fairbank 6-2, 6-3.

"I returned service badly on those games she won," Navratilova said after her victory. "I was moving around well and playing very solid."

Maleeva, the fifth seed in the tournament at Hyatt Grand Champions, also had an easy time of it in her quarterfinal. Sukova, meanwhile, had to work for her victory over Demongest.

After just one service break in the first set, Sukova won the match by winning the last two games.

"The score was better than the



Martina Navratilova

day before," said Sukova, who was taken to three sets in each of her two earlier matches in the tournament.

Frazier, 17, controlled her match against Fairbank.

"I think I'm playing good," Frazier said. "Maybe I'm gaining more confidence."

Barcelona prepares for 1992 Olympics

By Clare Pedrick

BARCELONA — The Olympic stadium has been ready for six months now. The cycling arena is finished. So, too, are the two swimming pools and the gymnasium. The hotel rooms for the 40,000 VIPs, judges and officials have been booked and inspected, even down to the quality of the orange juice and the number of newspapers to be offered each morning.

In the shops along the Rambla, Barcelona's main thoroughfare, "Cobi," the Olympic Games mascot officially described as "a friendly dog of avant-garde design," is everywhere to be seen, smiling out from mugs, T-shirts, badges and cigarette lighters and on posters showing him rowing, playing tennis, horseback riding and, in a suitably oriental version, dressed for a round of judo.

With well over two years to go before the arrival of the Olympic torch in the Montjuich stadium, the mood in Barcelona is decidedly snug.

"The Spanish have a reputation for doing things at the last minute, but that's not the case this time," said Luis Serrano, spokesman for the Barcelona Olympic Organising Committee. "We wanted to be able to contemplate all the problems well ahead of time. We're determined not to be caught out in 1992."

The precision with which preparations are going ahead is certainly more Prussian than Mediterranean in style. Each project has been included in a master plan, and target dates are re-

viewed every six months. At last count at the end of 1989, more than 85 per cent of the plans were on or ahead of schedule.

All of the sports facilities are due to be completed by the summer of 1991, and between now and the opening ceremony on July 25, 1992, 12 different world championships will be held on the new sites as a dress rehearsal for the games themselves.

"The Spanish mentality, and especially the business mentality, has changed tremendously over the past 10 years," said Serrano. "These days we are much more efficient, even more so in Barcelona, which is nearer to northern Europe than other parts of Spain."

Barcelona is going through a golden era right now. It is, as officials of the Olympic Committee never tire of pointing out, a city very much in vogue, partly because of its rich cultural heritage — the city of Picasso, Miro, Dali and Gaudi — and partly because it is the brightest star in the Spanish firmament at a time when Spain can do no wrong.

Barcelona has the highest growth rate in Spain, which in turn has the highest growth rate in Europe. Barcelona also has the country's lowest unemployment figures and a gross domestic product that is 30 per cent higher than the rest of Spain. Winning the bid for the Olympic Games has meant an additional 76,000 new jobs annually for the residents of Barcelona. It has also meant vast improvement in terms of new roads, communica-

tions and, of course, sports facilities. "The games will have a tremendous impact on the quality of life of the people of Barcelona," said Serrano. "They have got new phone lines, new hotels, tennis courts and a new airport terminal, all without spending a peseta."

As far as investment is concerned, Barcelona will end up making a profit of some 500 million pesetas (\$4.1 million) after all the bills have been paid. Thanks to its long tradition as a sports venue — in the past decade it has hosted the 1982 World Cup soccer championships, the 1984 World Cycling championships and in May 1989 the finals of the European Soccer championship tournament — 70 per cent of the facilities for the Olympics already exist, needing only expansion or renovation for the 1992 games.

The Olympic Stadium, located on the Montjuich, will be the starting point for the marathon as well as the setting for the opening and closing ceremonies. It was originally built in 1929 for Barcelona's International Exhibition. A team of Italian and Spanish architects has redesigned the interior of the stadium while preserving the original facade.

Television rights will bring in \$618 million. This is a third of the total income from the games, which will be the most widely covered in the history of the Olympics. The American NBC network is paying a record \$416 million for exclusive American broadcast rights. Australia's Channel 7 will pay \$33.75 million,

almost four times the figure it paid for the 1988 Seoul games. The Canadian network CTV has signed an agreement worth \$16.5 million, and the European Broadcasting Union will pay \$90 million. A pool of Japanese networks, led by NHK, will pay \$62.5 for exclusive rights in Japan.

Sponsorship pledges have also broken all previous records. Pledges so far amount to \$290 million, already more than in Seoul or Los Angeles.

A crucial part of the Barcelona strategy has been to study the successes and failures of the most recent Olympic host countries. A team from the Spanish Olympic Committee traveled to Los Angeles during the 1984 games — the year in which the Barcelona Olympic bid was accepted — and to Calgary for the 1988 Winter Olympics. A 90-member delegation, led by Barcelona's Mayor Pasqual Maragall, went to South Korea to examine the organisation of the Seoul games.

"Of course, every city that hosts the Olympics is completely different, in terms of its people, its infrastructure and its special problems," said Serrano. "Even so, we have learned a great deal from the experience of other countries. For example, from Calgary we learned a lot about how to organise security."

Security will certainly be one of the main headaches for organisers of the 1992 Olympics. Barcelona's Olympic Village, which will house the 15,000 participat-

ing athletes, has been described as the prettiest ever, built along the seashore on what was once an ugly industrial site. It could also, officials admit, prove to be the most difficult to police. "It's the only one ever to be built by the sea and of course, this will pose special problems," Serrano said. "Even so, we are optimistic that our precautions will prove up to the test. There will be around 15,000 police drafted in from all over Spain, and the coast will be patrolled by frogmen and military vessels."

The threat from Spain's own active terrorist groups would seem to be small. Olympic officials claim that both the Basque group ETA and the Catalan separatist organisation Terra Lliure have pledged not to sabotage the event. "These groups realise that the games have so much popular support that it would be counterproductive to try to disrupt them," Serrano noted.

One problem that even the super-organised Barcelonans have not been able to solve is the lack of accommodation for tourists coming to watch the games. With just 1.7 million residents, Barcelona is a relatively small city, and despite 22 new hotels and the chartering of six cruise liners to be used as floating hotels, almost all of the more than 400,000 visitors expected will have to find rooms outside the city.

"The problem is that all the bed space inside Barcelona itself

will be taken up by members of the Olympic Committee, VIPs, guests from the sponsoring companies, journalists and the like," said Serrano. "Almost everyone else will have to sleep in one of the satellite towns outside Barcelona or in the nearby coastal resorts along the Costa Brava and the Costa Dorada."

On the international front, Spain's uncontroversial profile should result in a higher-than-average turnout from participating nations, Serrano asserted. "The Moscow, Los Angeles and Seoul games had all affected by boycotts in one form or another, but Spain has no political enemies, so we're hoping this will be one of the best-attended Olympics for a long time." World News Link

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